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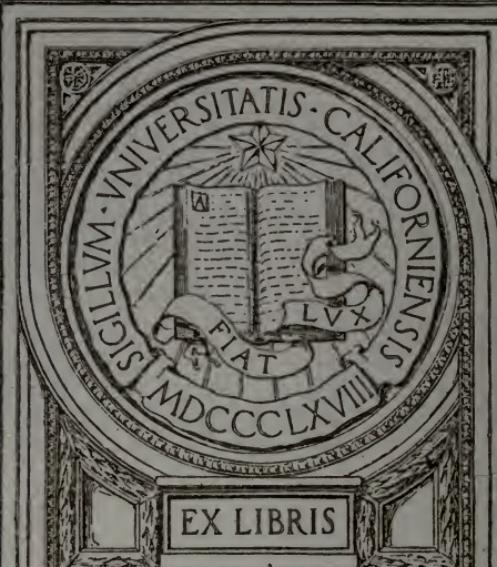


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HELLENIC INFLUENCE ON THE ENGLISH POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

J. F. C. GUTTELING

EXCHANGE



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ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT
TER VERKRIJGING VAN DEN GRAAD VAN
DOCTOR IN DE LETTEREN EN WIJSBEGEERTE
AAN DE UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM, OP GEZAG
VAN DEN RECTOR-MAGNIFICUS
Dr. J. K. A. WERTHEIM SALOMONSON,
HOOGLEERAAR IN DE FACULTEIT DER GENEESKUNDE,
IN HET OPENBAAR TE VERDEDIGEN IN DE AULA DER
UNIVERSITEIT OP VRIJDAG 7 APRIL DES NAMIDDAGS
TE 3 UUR DOOR
JOHANNA FREDERIKA CORNELIA GUTTELING,
GEBOREN TE UTRECHT.

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EXCHANGE

*TO THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER*

818055

Gaarne maak ik van aeze gelegenheid gebruik
een woord van dank te richten tot Dr. N. J. SINGELS
en de andere leeraren, wier onderricht ik genoten heb
aan het Stedelijk Gymnasium te Utrecht; in het bijzonder
denk ik hierbij aan Prof. Dr. J. J. G. VÜRTHEIM,
wiens Grieksche lessen mij tot deze studie hebben geïn-
spireerd.

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voor zijne welwillendheid en de wenken die ik gedurende
de bewerking van dit proefschrift van hem ontving.

Gedrukt bij H. G. VAN DORSEN — Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 44, AMSTERDAM

PREFACE.

The following study of Hellenic influence on the English poetry of the nineteenth century does not lay claim to completeness. As I was engaged upon this work, it has occurred to me more than once that I might do well to select a single chapter and make an exhaustive study of the influence on English poetry of the Homeric epic or the bucolic idyll, of Platonism or the Attic stage. Yet, when I attempted to make a choice, each subject in its turn seemed equally attractive and I knew that in choosing one I should feel sorry to leave out the rest. I determined, therefore, to comprise a wide range of Hellenic influence, though aware that of necessity large fields would remain untouched. If however this study, while making up by variety for what it lacks in completeness, may *suggest* the extent of Greek influence on the English poetry of the nineteenth century, the aim I have set myself will have been fairly attained.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens, imperial spirits,
Rule the present from the past,
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set."

SHELLEY. *Hellas.*

"We are all Greeks" said the poet of *Hellas*, "Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece . . . The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race."

It is the object of the present study to trace some of those channels through which the Greek genius has operated on the modern mind, to analyze the various forms of Hellenic influence which English literature and more especially the English poetry of the nineteenth century reveals.

As regards the term "English poetry of the nineteenth century" it may be well to state at once, that the scope of this booklet will not allow any minor poetry to be taken into account. And even of those poets who are generally named "classics" some will be considered, others will be excluded for reasons which

may well call for an explanation in this place. Wordsworth will be treated at some length, though to the casual reader he seems a typical romantic, because the influence of Platonism, a peculiar growth of the Hellenic mind, is traceable in his works. Keats, too, will be mentioned, although he knew no word of Greek, for the simple reason that, as Shelley said, he *was* a Greek, a pagan Greek in heart and soul and because owing to his remarkable mental affinity he was often able to divine what even Greek scholars failed to grasp. Byron, on the other hand, will be excluded from these pages for all his love of freedom and his enthusiasm for Greece, for modern Greece, it is true, but yet a Greece that was to him the lovely shadow of that glorious land of old, although his ardour found expression in such lines as:

“The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose and Phoebus sprung!”

— Byron must be excluded because on the whole his style is too slipshod and his matter too romantic for him to typify any great direct influence of Greece.

As regards the term “Hellenic”, to define what we understand by the genius, the spirit of ancient Greece seems at first sight a difficult task. For how shall we comprise within a cold and narrow formula that wide range of glowing activity which the spectacle of Greek life presents? How shall we sum up in a few phrases the common characteristics of Phidias the sculptor, of Plato the dreamer and Aristotle the man of fact, of Pindar celebrating athletic victories, Hesiod on his Boeotian farm, Socrates walking on the banks of Ilyssus and questioning his disciples on the nature of the soul? Again, whom do we mean by Greeks?

Dorians, Ionians, Aeolians or, rather confining ourselves to the City-States, Athenians, Spartans, Thebans; and do we mean the artist, the poet, the philosopher or the average citizen in the street? And from what ages shall we take our typical Greek, shall he be an Achaean of the age of Homer, an Athenian from the days of Pericles or a Greek of Alexandria in the reign of the Ptolemies?

In defining the Hellenic spirit we shall select certain common qualities which did exist in spite of differences of individuality, place and time, qualities which have manifested themselves in the best works of thinkers and writers and artists and for our field of observation we shall choose that brilliant season of the heyday of the Greek genius, the years between 600 and 400 B. C. Then, no doubt, we impose upon ourselves some arbitrary limitations and from our definition we exclude certain spheres of thought and aspects of Hellenic life; but on the other hand we may realize that which was fundamental and essential in the genius of the Greek race, that which has lived and like a leaven permeated the civilisations of after times.

Most obvious of the characteristics of the ancient Greeks was their all-pervading *sense of beauty*, of beauty consisting in harmony, symmetry, measure. This sense of beauty ran through the whole of life, it affected not only sculpture, architecture, literature but also conduct, morals and philosophy. They did not strain beyond the possible, applying to all their works their favourite maxim *μηδὲν ἄγαν* (nothing to excess) and the ideas of *καρπός* (drawing the line) and *τὸ πέρας* (limitation). But within their limits they realized the beautiful to perfection and for mere beauty their art and literature have been equalled, perhaps, but never surpassed. Then they carried their sense of beauty into the domain of morals: to them victory, tempe-

rance, eloquence, wisdom were καλόν. Oedipus calls himself the noblest of the sons of Thebes:

κάλλιστ' ἄνηρ εἰς ἐν γε ταῖς Θήβαις τραφεῖς.¹⁾

The Greek ideal of a gentleman was the man who was καλὸς κἀγαθός, of perfect physical and mental sanity, beautiful and good in body as in soul.

Still it would be erroneous to assume that the Greeks were mere aesthetes. The idea propagated by Winckelmann and Goethe — who drew their notions of Hellenism mainly from Greek art — that the Greeks were beyond all things beauty-lovers, has been corrected by scholars of these latter days. The Greeks had many qualities besides and they were occupied with many things other than and many things alien from beauty.

They were lovers of *freedom* too, those ancient Greeks, freedom in religious, in moral, in political speculation. R. W. Livingstone in *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us* draws a comparison between the Greek and the Hebraic attitude to religion and observes that, whereas the Jew had to accept the God that was revealed to his people, the Greek created his own gods, created them, we might say, in his own image, and that the Greek religion being anthropomorphic and therefore plastic left thought absolutely free. Then he notes that in politics, too, the Greek enjoyed unbounded license or παρρησία and remarks that political individualism is writ large across the history of Greece. And because there were no forces preventing man from seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, the Greeks possessed to the full that precious quality which Matthew Arnold has called “an unclouded clearness of mind” and daring thinkers such as Plato

¹⁾ Oedipus Tyrannus. 1380.

and Euripides have reached in their speculations to the very boundaries of human thought.

The Greeks, as another writer says, "looked out on the world with the imperturbable eyes of unabashed intelligence".¹⁾ And their view of the world was determined by a peculiar *directness*, a tendency to see things naked, as it were, with only their "actual and unimaginary qualities" and to look the facts of life straight in the face, treat them as realities and appreciate them not with sentiment, but with reason and common sense. This directness of the Greek vision is aptly illustrated by their attitude toward Love. With the one notable exception of Plato, who struck the mystic and modern note, the Greeks treated love as an earthly passion which, however exalted, still retains its feet of clay and nowhere in their literature do we find the mediaeval and modern aspiration of straining beyond nature to supersensuous worlds unrealized. They themselves said they disliked the infinite, τὸ ἄπειρον, and speaking generally, mysticism is foreign to their literature and their art. They kept their feet firmly on the ground, they lived in a world finite and actual and real, and with strong good sense they viewed the facts of life, as well the darkness as the light, enabled, in the words of Keats:

"To bear all naked truths
And to envisage circumstance, all calm."

Now if we ask ourselves how, according to what measure the Greeks interpreted the facts of life, we may answer with the saying attributed to Protagoras: ἀνθρωπος μέτρον πάντων. And this leads us to another quality characteristic of the race, the note of *humanism* pervading all Greek life. To the Greek the individual man was the standard of all things and man was to

¹⁾ F. G. Tucker: "The Foreign Debt of English Literature". Ch. I, p. 37.

him a splendid unity of body and soul with brilliant possibilities which might be realized even in this finite life but also with certain definite limits imposed on him by Nature and the Divine Powers. These limits he ascertained and recognized and from the recognition sprang a perfectly sane and harmonious conception of the relation between Man and Nature, Man and God. Listen to Pindar, in whose Odes counsel in matters of conduct and religion is blended with praise of the victor and myths linking the present with the heroic past:

μή μάτενε Ζεὺς γενέσθαι πάντ' ἔχει
εἴ σε τούτων μοῖρ' ἐφίκοιτο καλῶν
θνατὰ θνατοῖσι πρέπει.

Isth. V 14—16.

(Seek not to be Zeus. Thou hast all, if thou shouldst obtain a share of these honours. To mortals what is mortal is seemly.)

— or again the famous lines:

ἐπάμεροι τί δέ τις; τί δ'οὖ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ
ἀνθρώπος. ἀλλ' ἔταν αἴγιλα διόσδοτος ἔλθη
λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἐπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ μείλιχος αἰών.

Pyth. VIII 135—139.

(Creatures of a day, what are we? What are we not? Man is but the dream of a shadow. But when the God-given radiance comes, brilliant light is upon mortals and gentle life.)

And necessarily from this conception of the relation between the human and the divine sprang the Greek religion, that eminently human religion, that world of gods created by man in his own image, yet far superior by reason of their immortality and greater powers. “One race of men; one race of Gods, but we both draw life from one mother; but all diversity of power doth sunder us, for the one is verily nothing,

but the brazen heaven abideth an unshaken foundation." Nem. VI 1—4.

The Greeks, being thoroughly human, took an interest in the essential things of human life. They were, as Sainte-Beuve has said, "énergiques, frais, dispos"; they were not "faibles, malades, maladifs" as we moderns too often are. Perhaps they were too much like children to be given to ascetism or mysticism or any of the morbid tendencies tired humanity has developed in later years. For they were a young, vigorous race, standing in the morning of the world, enjoying the sunlight, the clear sky and the blue Ionian sea. They had not yet outgrown an interest in the simple, ordinary emotions of mankind; they still could feel a generous sympathy for those thoughts and passions and feelings which are of all ages and all men. They could take an equal delight in the things of the body and those of the mind, glorying in their physical excellence and beauty no less than in their keen and lucid intelligence and the aim of their education was that full, harmonious development in which every human faculty should come to its proper share. So they maintained the balance of perfect physical and mental *sanity* and at the same time realized that brilliant *manysidedness* which has made the ancient Greeks the glory and the wonder of the human race.

If then we define Hellenism as that attitude towards life in which a sense of beauty mingles with a love of freedom, humanism, sanity and many-sidedness, we should bear in mind — let it be said once more — that the Greek genius is more than this. "For in fact", as Livingstone observes "the Greeks were parents alike of ribaldry and of high moral endeavour, of rationalism and of emotional worship, of Socrates and of Pythagoras, of Aristophanes and

of Zeno. They are the epitome of human nature. Quemvis hominum secum attulit ad nos: the Greek has brought us all humanity wrapped up in himself, and any one who attempts a book on his genius will learn in the writing to beware of denying him any quality.”¹⁾

We have now briefly to consider the term “Hellenic” as applied to the form and the style of Greek literary works.

The Greeks, as we have seen, possessed a keen instinct for beauty and of all the beautiful things they created their own language was the first and the most wonderful. Being themselves bright and keen and susceptible to nice distinctions and light shades of meaning they gradually moulded their language in such a way that with the help of “particles”, a peculiar turn of phrase or a slight change in the order of a sentence they could mark those shades of thought and feeling as clearly as a finely modulated voice or the play of features on a sensitive human face. This language has been called in the eloquent words of Nelson Coleridge “the shrine of the genius of the old world; as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and the distinctness of nature herself; to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English, with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer.”

A sense of measure and proportion was essential to the Greek conception of beauty and nowhere is this sense more clearly exhibited than in the masterly handling of their noble language, in the perfect style of

¹⁾ R. W. Livingstone: “The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us” Introduction p. 16.

their poetry and prose. Says Aristotle in Rhetoric III vii : "Style will possess the quality of being in good taste, if it be expressive at once of feeling and character and in keeping with the subject matter. And this proportion is preserved, provided the style be neither careless on questions of dignity nor dignified on such as are mean, and if ornament be not attached to a mean word, for otherwise it appears mere burlesque." And in the best Greek literature we always find a style which is in perfect harmony with the subject and a language which is clear and simple, conveying the sense in the fittest words. There is in Greek literature a luminous clarity, a transparency of thought which is the result on the one hand of a fastidious choice of words, a careful selection of the absolutely correct term to express an idea — and on the other hand of a rigorous self-restraint which scorns mere luxury of words and suppresses any phrase that would not serve the rational purpose of throwing light upon the sense. "Hellenic style", says Tucker, "means in literature a perfect directness with just so much of the figurative as will flash light upon the sense" ¹⁾.

When in the following pages we shall illustrate Hellenic influence on the English poetry of the nineteenth century, we have to consider first of all the influence of that entire scope of thinking and of style we call Hellenic. We shall analyze the minds of the great nineteenth century poets to see how far they were in sympathy with the mind and genius of ancient Greece. We shall consider the form and style of their poetry and test it by the standards of Greek literary art. But the extent of our subject is wider than this. We shall next have to deal with the various branches of

¹⁾ Op. cit. Ch. I. p. 37.

Greek literature: the epic, the lyric, the drama, the bucolic idyll and the philosophy of which Platonism has most richly tinged the poetry of later times. In separate chapters will be discussed each of these great forms of literature invented by the creative genius of the Greeks, and their influence on the works of the English nineteenth century poets Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Landor, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold and Swinburne.

As an introduction to this special study of the nineteenth century a brief sketch of Hellenic influence in English literature precedes.

CHAPTER II.

BRIEF SURVEY OF HELLENIC INFLUENCE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Before considering in detail Hellenic influence on the English poetry of the nineteenth century we shall trace in outline the growth and development of that influence through the English literature of previous times.

In the earliest English writings, in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon period, no traces are found of Hellenic influence whatever, and very few traces indeed of an actual knowledge of Greek.

The Anglo-Saxon period came to an end through the Norman Conquest, which brought about a Latin Renaissance in England in which Greek however had no part. Still, a Latin Renaissance meant a Greek Renaissance at second hand; for Roman literature, being one vast plagiarism of the Greek — preserving the form, though lacking the taste and the spontaneity of its model — was but a medium that transmitted the light issuing ultimately from Greece.

There was an early Greek Renaissance in Western Europe in the thirteenth century, subsequent to the capture of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204; and in England, too, there are indications of an awakening interest in Greek studies, though the enthusiasm died down almost as soon as it arose. In Chaucer, one of the most cultivated men of the period, no traces are found of an acquaintance with Greek, and his only debt to Greece was a jumble of myths and Homeric

stories, of which crude notions had come to him through Latin, Italian or French. Paul Shorey says: "The Middle Ages knew Aristotle, Hippocrates the physician, Virgil the mage, Ovid the story-teller, Boethius the Consoler . . . the Tale of Troy and the legend of Alexander, looming monstrous through the mists of tradition, or distorted in the mirror of chivalrous fancy."¹⁾ They had no direct contact with Greek texts and consequently no manner of conception of the style and the form of Greek literary works.

At last, however, the influence was to become direct. The dawn followed by the glorious daylight of the Revival of Greek Learning dates for Italy from the year 1396, when, through the appointment of Manuel Chrysoloras to what we should now call the chair of Greek language and literature at Florence, Greek became a part of Italian culture even before the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. Already before, and in still larger numbers after 1453, Greeks of learning fled westward to the shelter of the Italian City-States, which had begun to awaken from a long intellectual torpor: the court of the Medici at Florence was opened to Greek scholars, Greek MSS. enriched the libraries of Florence and Rome, and the class-rooms of Greek teachers such as Chalcondyles and Politian were thronged by Italian students, and, towards the end of the fifteenth century, also frequently visited by Englishmen. For about that time the relations, political and social, between England and Italy were becoming closer than they had ever been before and Englishmen of the scholarly class began to complete their education in an Italian university. Among these English scholars were William Grocyn, the first to

¹⁾ "Classical Literature and Learning. (Congress of Arts and Sciences.)"
Vol. III, pp. 383 ff.

lecture on Greek at Oxford (1491) and his younger associates Linacre and Latimer. Next to these men we should mention Dr. Richard Croke, one of Grocyn's pupils at Oxford, and the first Professor of Greek in the University of Cambridge (1519) and the Dutchman Erasmus who taught both in Oxford and Cambridge during his third sojourn in England in 1511. By this time Greek became regularly established in England and was recognized not only in the great foundations of Christ Church and Trinity College, Cambridge, but also in St. Paul's School, instituted in 1509 by the scholar John Colet, in many grammar-schools erected after the Pauline model, and some years later, about 1550, also at Eton, Westminster, Merchant Taylors and the Cathedral Schools.

Passing from the study into life, from scholars to men and women of society, we find about the time of the Reformation a wide diffusion of the new learning among the higher circles and at Court. Well-known are Ascham's statements that he found Lady Jane Grey reading her Plato and that the Princess, afterwards Queen Elizabeth devoted the beginning of her day to the Greek Testament, Isocrates, and the tragedies of Sophocles.

Then follows the Elizabethan era, when the Renaissance reached at last beyond scholastic and courtly circles, electrifying England with a current of new thoughts, quickening a "new birth" both of intellect and art, prompting an outburst of literary creation, of splendid drama and poetry and prose. The spirit of Greece had dispersed at last the long night of mediaevalism, liberated the human mind from the bondage of restraining creeds, awakened in man a sense of his own personality, a new interest in nature, in literature, in eloquence and art.

And eagerly the Elizabethan writers threw them-

selves upon the rediscovered treasures of ancient Greece, seizing on the plots of Greek epics and dramas, plucking epithets, metaphors, similes, expressions, and adorning their own works with classical allusions — but though they caught the matter and the substance through translations, they still failed to catch the spirit and the style, for as yet their actual knowledge of Greek was too slight, their vision of Greek life and thought too distorted for them to appreciate the unfailing sanity, the severe restraint of the Hellenic taste.

Shakespeare was, in a sense, no Grecian, owing less to the Greeks and more to his own genius acting upon desultory reading, than other writers of the time or since. One important debt he owed to Greece — through the “University Wits” who were his immediate predecessors — viz. the general shape and form of the poetic drama; for the romantic tragedies and comedies were modelled either directly or through Italian imitations on the Latin plays of Seneca, Plautus, Terence and these, in their turn, were modelled on the Greek. Shakespeare’s style has the Elizabethan tendency to profuseness of imagery and redundancy of expression and hardly ever shows the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the Greeks.

Spenser was acquainted with the Greek language and well versed in the poetry and the philosophy of Greece. His own works reveal the influence of Homer, chiefly the *Odyssey*, of Pindar, of Theocritus, who indirectly suggested *The Shepheards Calender*, of Aristotle, on whose ethics the allegory of the *Faerie Queene* is based, of Plato most of all, for whom Spenser had a mental affinity and whose theory of Ideas he embodies in his account of the gardens of Adonis¹⁾ and again in the unfinished portion of the seventh book of the

¹⁾ “Faerie Queene” III.

Faerie Queene. The *Fowre Hymnes* again breathe the very spirit of Platonism and abound in allusions to the Platonic theory of Love. Spenser's language, however, is exuberantly romantic and nowhere betrays the chastening influence of Greece.

Among seventeenth century poets Milton was a fine Greek scholar and the texture of his verse is shot through and through with colours borrowed from the Greek. His *Paradise Lost* — and, to a less extent, *Paradise Regained* — abounds in reminiscences from Homer, whereas the central figure, Satan,¹⁾ recalls the Prometheus of Aeschylus.

¹⁾ It is in Satan's mouth that Milton has placed this noblest of all tributes to the genius of Greece.

"Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold,
Where on the Aegean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil;
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits,
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Thrills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream; within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages; his, who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next.
There shalt Thou hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
Aeolian charms, and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phoebus challenged for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught,
In chorus or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received

His drama *Samson Agonistes* is absolutely Greek in form, though its autobiographical character is foreign to the Greek. The splendid elegy *Lycidas* goes back for its origin to the ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΣ ΒΙΩΝΟΣ by Moschus or to the dirge over Daphnis in the first idyll of Theocritus. Milton's poetry shows an advance upon Spenser's in two respects: firstly in the chastening of his style, which, for all its elaborate artificiality, approaches more nearly to the classical ideal; secondly in the fact that the Greek thoughts and expressions which he borrows so freely have been sunk, imbedded in his own, that he has woven them into his fabric, not merely overlaid his work with them as Spenser did.

In the eighteenth century the poets of the "classical" school of Pope were but indirectly influenced by the genius of Greece. The principles of Greek literary criticism — as they had been settled in their completed form by the Latin authors of the time of Augustus and afterwards interpreted by the Renaissance scholars for modern use — had come down to them in French translations (with the commentaries of French critics)

In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;
High actions, and high passions best describing.
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic.
Shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne:
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From heaven descended to the low-roofed house
Of Socrates; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspired the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe;"

"Paradise Regained" IV 237—284.

and exercised a powerful influence in the shaping of both thought and style. Their effect is seen in a directness and clear simplicity of diction, in a general sense of order, propriety, moderation and law. These poets approach the Greek ideal in their exquisite skill of execution; they depart from it in their lack of spontaneity and sincerity, in their avoidance of real emotion and of the depths and heights of human thought. And “classical” in the true sense they are not, for “to be classical is to express matter of sterling worth in a style for ever fresh, not to utter brilliantly a nothing, an artificiality or a commonplace.”¹⁾

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, at the dawn of the great Romantic Revival, we trace what has been called a Second Greek Renaissance in the poetry of Akenside, Collins, Mason, Glover and Gray. The Hellenism of these poets is strongly mixed with Romanticism and their models in many cases are Spenser and Milton rather than the Greeks. Yet Akenside wrote the graceful and sculpturesque *Hymn to the Naiads*, which abounds in classical allusions and recalls the Callimachan hymns; Collins took a keen interest in things Hellenic and aimed at producing poetry clear and simple as the Greek; Mason wrote two tragedies *Elfrida* and *Caractacus* in conscious imitation of the Attic drama; Glover modelled on Homer his epics *Leonidas* and *Athenaid*. Gray, last but not least, was a scholar of rare attainments in both the language and the literature — especially the poetry — of Greece. Hellenic influence is revealed in such poems as *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* which were composed in competition with Pindar's triumphal Odes. In later years Gray applied himself

¹⁾ F. G. Tucker: “The Foreign Debt of English Literature”. Chap. I, p. 43.

to the study of Icelandic and Celtic verse and in his poetry are many strains which are alien from the Greek.

We have now traced Hellenic influence up to the literature of the nineteenth century, have seen it wax and wane again with the spirit of the age: from early English writing, where it was indirect and roundabout; to the Revival of Greek Learning and the direct contact with Greek texts, imparting a knowledge of Grecian story, though hardly as yet a conception of Greek style; thence to Milton in the seventeenth century, deeply versed in the Greek classics, moulding his style to elaborate perfection and lavishly weaving into his poetry thoughts and expressions from the Greek; from Milton to the "pseudo-classical" school of Pope, approaching the Greek ideal in mere literary technique, yet lacking the sincerity and the spontaneity of the Greeks; thence finally to a small band of eighteenth century poets blending an interest in things Hellenic with the tendencies of awakening Romanticism and handing on the burning torch to the great age of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats.

What the vision of Greek antiquity meant to the poets of the nineteenth century has been aptly expressed by Paul Shorey in these words: "To the nineteenth century it is the recapture of something of that first careless Renaissance rapture, tempered by a finer historical sense, controlled by a more critical scholarship . . . It is the Periclean ideal of a complete culture reinterpreted by Goethe and Matthew Arnold. It is the deeper sense of the quality of the supreme masters, Homer, Aeschylus, Pindar, Plato, Aristophanes. It is the inspiration of Greek poetry revived in Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Arnold and Swinburne. It is Greek philosophy, an unexhausted domain of research for

the scholar, an inexhaustible source of suggestion for the thinker and the poet.”¹⁾

The literature of the early nineteenth century, of the generation of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats is again shot through and through with colours borrowed from the Greek. It is penetrated with the influence of Greek poetry, Greek mythology, Greek philosophy in its widest sense. It is inspired by an enthusiasm akin to that first Renaissance rapture, for the culture of Greece as revealed in her literature and art. There is an advance, therefore, upon the age of Pope, for now once more the spirit is of the first moment. Still the age of Shelley and Keats was less Greek than the following “Victorian” age for their Hellenism was expressed in the language of Romanticism and neither the sensuous revellings of Keats nor Shelley’s ethereal rhapsodizings betray any of the self-repression we associate with the name of Greece.

Since their days, however, the study of Greek has been set on a new basis: after a patient, observant study of the language Greek literature has been approached with a better appreciation of its qualities of thought and style.

The first poet to reveal the effects of this deeper study is Walter Savage Landor, who — though his scholarship may have been more extensive than accurate — has justly been called the most Hellenic poet of the age. Although born as early as 1775 he forms the link between Shelley and Keats and the great Victorians Tennyson and Matthew Arnold.

The poetry of both Arnold and Tennyson is pervaded with Greek thoughts and ideas; it abounds in phrases and expressions borrowed from the Greek; they both

¹⁾ “Classical Literature and Learning (Congress of Arts and Sciences).” Vol III, pp. 383 ff.

attain in their best work the perfection of Greek style, which is the union of “sane, clear, yet unhackneyed thought” with “ sane, clear, yet unhackneyed phrase”.

We may end this chapter with Tucker’s statement “It is no paradox to assert that since Chaucer’s day we have been passing more and more under the dominion of Greek thoughts and Greek literary principles and that we are groping forward to a literary ideal which will turn out to have been the ideal of ancient Greece”.¹⁾.

¹⁾ Op. cit. Ch. I, p. 44.

CHAPTER III.

SURVEY OF HELLENIC INFLUENCE ON THE GREAT ENGLISH POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Following up what has been said at the end of the last chapter we may divide the great nineteenth century poets into two groups, of which the first reveals Greek influence in the spirit of their writings, in a sympathy with the ideals of ancient Greece; the second shows Greek influence also in form and style, in a classical restraint, a clear beauty of expression, in borrowings and imitations from Greek literary works. Outside these groups stands Wordsworth, who owes his place in this study to his affinity with Plato, whereas Swinburne, although he is one of the "Victorians" belongs in virtue of his romantic diction to the earlier group of Shelley and Keats.

Passing by, then, for the moment Wordsworth¹⁾, who will be treated at length in the chapter on Platonism,

¹⁾ In the "Sewanee Review" vol. XXIII, 1915 occurs an interesting article by Prof. J. W. Tupper on "The Growth of the Classical in Wordsworth's Poetry", in which the development of the classical element in Wordsworth's poetry is traced, the growing sincerity in thought and dignity in style, and the final realization of the Hellenic ideal in Laodamia, where the husband is the embodiment of the classical and the wife that of the romantic type of thought. Characteristic for the Hellenic attitude of mind are the lines in which Protesilaus attempts to soothe Laodamia's passion:

"The Gods approve
The depth and not the tumult of the soul."

But this development took place under the influence of the Roman Classics, especially Virgil, and lies outside the present study which is only concerned with the direct influence of the Greek.

we find in Keats a striking example of a natural affinity with the mind and temper of the ancient Greeks. Well-known is the fact that Keats never learned the Greek language: probably he was too lazy to undertake the drudgery necessary to the task. But what he felt for the great Greek writers, whose Greek he could not read, may be gathered from his lines to Homer:

“Standing aloof in giant ignorance
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades
As one who stands ashore and longs perchance
To visit dolphin coral in deep seas.”

Keats was versed in Greek legend and mythology¹⁾ as perhaps never Englishman was before. From Greece he derived the subjects of his greatest poetry, of *Hyperion*, *Endymion*, as well as his chief odes. And when Shelley was asked how it was possible that Keats, with his antecedents, should have made so many allusions to Grecian story, the simple answer was: “Because he *was* a Greek.” Indeed, as Tucker says, in heart and soul, in the sensuous enjoyment of life [Keats] was himself a pagan Greek²⁾. He had innate in him that part of the Greek spirit which “loves the principle of beauty in all things”: to him “a thing of beauty” was “a joy for ever”, Beauty itself identical with Truth, and in *Hyperion* he laid down the eternal law

“That first in beauty should be first in might.”

The beauty Keats loved was sensuous beauty and unlike the Greeks he did not carry the idea of τὸ καλόν into the domain of morals and of abstract thought. Still there is a curious passage in a letter to a friend where Keats, arguing against the distrust of the

¹⁾ His knowledge of classical mythology he derived from Lemprière's Dictionary, Tooke's “Pantheon,” Spence's “Polymetis” and English poetry. See Cambridge Ed. Keats p. XVI; Colvin: “John Keats” p. 10.

²⁾ Op. Cit. Ch. I. p. 63.

imagination as a guide to truth, says, in effect, that whenever a beautiful vision rises before the imagination, it is but the reflex of a divine prototype which will be seen in the after life. Here Keats unwittingly — for he had never read Plato — reveals a tendency which had found more scientific expression in the Platonic theory of Ideas, and betrays another side of that inborn affinity to the mind and genius of ancient Greece.

When the poetry of Keats was described as “the wail and remonstrance of a disinherited paganism” that criticism was singularly unjust. There runs, indeed, through his poetry a strain of regret for the glory and the loveliness that have passed from the earth; but his regret was for the beauty, not for the paganism, and no one felt more finely than Keats did the sense in which the spiritual existence of that beauty, of that Grecian beauty has been preserved:

“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but more endeared
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone;

.....
O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st
“Beauty is truth, truth beauty” — that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.”

The *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, from which these lines have been taken is in spirit the most Hellenic of English poems and recalls the beauty of Attic sculpture in its serene and passionless repose.

Besides being a lover of beauty Keats was also truly a Greek in this respect that he felt a vivid and spontaneous sympathy for the life of external nature and loved to embody the powers of nature in human shapes of more than human loveliness and charm. Like the ancient Greeks Keats loved nature for her own sake and in this respect he differed from both Shelley and Wordsworth: from Shelley, to whom the visible world was but a veil of the unseen; from Wordsworth, who read his personal aspirations into the natural scenery around. And when Keats embodies the powers of nature in human shapes, he is again strikingly Hellenic in his identification of the gods with the powers they represent. “Ζεὺς ἔρει” says the Greek, “Zeus rains”, thus substituting the name of the god for the element he represents. So in the first book of *Hyperion* there are descriptions of a sunset and a sunrise, and the departure of the sun-god and his return to earth are painted in such a way, that the pictures we see are those of an evening- and a morning-sky, of an angry sunset and a grey and misty dawn:

“Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He entered, but he entered full of wrath;
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his heels,

On he flared
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault.”

and

"He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Cleared them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds."

Although by native sympathy Keats apprehended the spirit of Greek literature, his ignorance of the language prevented him from grasping the principles of Greek style. Landor was right when he observed that Keats's style was "extremely far removed from the boundaries of Greece". His manner, even in treating classical subjects, is not Greek, though occasionally in his best work — and then only for brief spaces — he comes near the classical ideal of directness, simplicity, restraint. On the whole his style is essentially romantic and has the faults of excess, extravagance and riot of words. Like the Elizabethans, too, Keats delights in a luxuriance of detail, as when in *Hyperion* he describes the palace of the god:

"Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touched with shade of bronzed obelisks."

And he lacks the Hellenic concentration which gives clear outline to the central idea and dispenses with all ornament that might confuse or obscure.

Unlike Keats, Shelley was a fair Greek scholar and a studious reader of Greek poetry, drama, philosophical and historical prose. Hogg says of him: "Few were aware of the extent and still fewer of the profundity of his reading; in his short life, and without ostentation he had in truth read more Greek than many an aged pedant . . . Although he had not entered critically into the minute niceties of the noblest of languages, he was thoroughly conversant with the valuable matter

it contains. A pocket edition of Plato or Plutarch or Euripides, without interpretation or notes . . . was his constant companion and he read the text straightforward for hours."

Considering this profound and extensive reading of the classics, Hellenic influence on Shelley's language is surprisingly small. His style is, indeed, romantic to excess: the ecstatic visions and the rich aerial pictures wholly lack the sanity, the restraint, the directness of the Greeks. Any of the fine passages that come to mind will serve to illustrate the peculiar qualities of Shelley's style; but for our purpose we may compare Sappho's well-known picture of the apple with Shelley's description of the lily of the vale.

Sappho says:

Οῖον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρείπεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὕσδω
ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ· λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπηνες,
οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεσθαι.

And Shelley:

"The Naiad-like lily of the vale
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green."

Sappho describes what has been vividly seen in a few luminous touches and by sheer directness achieves a gem-like picture of one sweet apple reddening on the topmost branch.

Shelley is not content with merely stating the "actual and unimaginary qualities" of the flower; to him the lily of the vale is like a fair young Naiad trembling with passion and of such a luminous pallor, that the white light shines through the leaves of tender green. These lines illustrate the peculiar "translucency" of Shelley's pictures, that quality of continual dissolving and transcending, of opening up new visions within

or through the old. And the result of Shelley's description is not one vivid, clearly-cut picture, but rather a succession of images dissolving into each other with the swiftness of thought.

Although Shelley was not susceptible to the chastening influence of Greek style, though — for this is also remarkable considering the extent of his reading — he did not borrow from the Greeks with the freedom of Tennyson or Matthew Arnold, we may safely say that never poet was inspired by the spirit of Greek writings to such ardent admiration of the genius of Greece. This enthusiasm prompted the eulogy on Hellas and her people :

“Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens, imperial spirits,
Rule the present from the past,
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.”

it made him look forward in the final chorus of “*Hellas*” to the return of the golden years, when a brighter Greece should rear its mountains and another Athens rise to bequeath to later ages “the splendour of its prime”; it shaped his conviction that “we are all Greeks” and that whatever civilization we moderns possess harks ultimately back through the darkness of ages to the glorious culture of ancient Greece.

And yet for all his ardent admiration of Hellas, Shelley's temper was in many respects as un-Hellenic as his style. He did, indeed, possess the Greek sense of beauty and the Greek love of freedom and impatience of restraint; but he lacked the Greek directness of vision, the humanism which draws the line between Man and God and the sanity which denies the need

of conflict between the life of the body and the life of the soul.

The average Greek, as we have seen, treated the facts of life as realities and human life itself as an actual and finite good; to Shelley on the other hand our life on earth was but a dream and the things of this world unreal shadows, mere copies of an unseen eternity behind.

. . . This life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem
And we the shadows of a dream,

.
That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never passed away:
'T is we, 't is ours are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

Conclusion to "The Sensitive Plant".

Again the Greek drew the line between the temporal and the eternal, the mortal and the immortal — *θνατὰ θνάτοισι πρέπει* — and had no mystic aspiration to reach beyond the sensuous world; Shelley, on the other hand was constantly and passionately straining to get away from the visible, the material and rise to an unseen, spiritual heaven-world. Lastly Shelley did not share the Greek conception of man as a unity of body and soul: he believed in an antagonism between the senses and the spirit and regarded man as a dual being in whom the lower self, the body, is in conflict with the higher self, the soul.

Now in all these divergencies from the typical Hellenic spirit, Shelley agrees with the greatest philosopher of Greece. For Plato, too, deviates from the spirit of Hellas, Plato the dreamer, the unwordly mystic, vividly conscious of the invisible and eternal behind or within the temporal and the seen. And in the final chapter of the present study we shall see how in Shelley natural affinity has combined with serious study to permeate his poetry with the spirit of Platonism, to saturate his mind with Platonic thoughts.

Walter Savage Landor, "the sturdiest Hellenic" among nineteenth century poets combined with the natural sympathy of Keats an adequate knowledge of the Greek language and a close acquaintance with Greek literary works. Sidney Colvin says of him: "Of all things he was perhaps the most of a Greek at heart. His freedom from any tincture of mysticism, his love of unconfused shapes and outlines, his easy dismissal of the unfathomable and the unknown, and steady concentration of the mind upon the purely human facts of existence, its natural sorrows and natural consolations, all helped him to find in the life of ancient Greece a charm without alloy, and in her songs and her philosophies a beauty and a wisdom without shortcoming. Adequate scholarship, and a close literary familiarity with the Greek writers, fortified this natural sympathy with the knowledge which was wanting to Keats, whose flashes of luminous and enraptured insight into things Hellenic are for want of such knowledge lacking in coherency and in assurance. Landor, on his part is without Keats's gift, the born poet's gift, of creative, untaught felicity in epithet and language; his power over language is of another kind, more systematic, trained and regular.¹⁾.

¹⁾ "Landor" (English Men of Letters) p. 191.

Landor resembled Keats in his natural affinity to the Greeks. But there was this difference that where Keats sometimes wrote as an instinctive Greek, Landor always remained himself, "most Greek because most English", an Englishman of the ideal type, sane and harmonious as the Greeks.

His whole ideal of life was characteristically Greek. It is expressed in its highest terms in that refined type of Epicureanism set forth in his own favourite among the *Imaginary Conversations*, in the dialogue between Epicurus and his girl-pupils Leontion and Ternissa, where in the graceful talk of love and flowers and wisdom in the Athenian garden the Greek conception of the harmonious play of soul and body is revealed in its irresistible charm. "The choice and tempered way of life, the culture of all beautiful things, the delight in flowers, and in the friendship of youth and grace, the withdrawal from the insoluble mysteries of life, all these things Landor shared with Epicurus."¹⁾ This exquisite dialogue is with Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* the noblest expression in modern literature of the ideal Epicurean philosophy of life.

But if Landor was "of all things the most of a Greek at heart", if he was sane and direct and had an aversion to mysticism, it follows almost naturally that he should fail to appreciate Plato, the great exception to the genius of Greece. Indeed, in another of the *Imaginary Conversations*, in the dialogue between Diogenes and Plato, which is "at once the most pungent and the most majestic" of the Greek, Landor gives his independent judgment on Plato and expresses his contempt for the fantastic metaphysics in which the great mystic embodied his dreams on the universe. According to his own statement he had read the

¹⁾ C. H. Herford: "The Age of Wordsworth" p. 280.

complete works of Plato through in the Magliabecchian Library at Florence; and this reading had inspired him with an invincible dislike for the “bodiless incomprehensible vagaries” of Plato and the “falsely redundant style” in which they were expressed.

If in his verdict on Plato Landor differed from the received opinion, he agreed on the other hand with most students of the Greek classics in his ardent devotion to Pindar and Aeschylus. In the Aeschylus of *Prometheus Bound*, of the revolt of the Titan and the agony bravely borne, he admired “the loud clear challenge, the firm, unsteady step, of an erect broad-breasted soldier”. And in Pindar, whom he honoured next to Aeschylus among the Greek and Milton among the English classics, he admired “the proud complacency and scornful strength”. “If I could resemble him in nothing else”, he said, “I was resolved to be as compendious and exclusive.”

Perhaps Landor aspired to the Pindaric ideal all the more since it agreed with the natural character of his style. And the result of his severe restraint and repression is, that very often his narrative poetry becomes abrupt, obscure because of its very conciseness, rugged because all smoothing, harmonizing transitions are cut away. For these reasons Landor never became a favourite with the public, to whom his wealth of classical allusions, his love of clearness and purity of outline appeared cold, who found his diction too pellucid, his style of too delicate a precision to their taste. And yet Landor’s style has a beauty all its own for those who can appreciate its noble epic grandeur relaxing at times into winning grace and charm.

Nowhere is the Hellenic influence revealed in a fuller form than in the *Imaginary Conversations*, imitated from Plato or Theocritus or Lucian, and in the *Hellenics*, the English rendering of his early *Idyllia Heroica*, those

charming idylls covering the whole range of Hellenic legend and of which the most perfect, *The Death of Artemidora*, is conceived in the very spirit of Attic sculpture and affords a consummate example of Landor's poetic style.

"Artemidora! Gods invisible
While thou art lying faint along the couch,
Have tied the sandals to thy slender feet,
And stand beside thee, ready to convey
Thy weary steps where other rivers flow.
Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
Away, and voices like thy own come near
And nearer, and solicit an embrace."

Artemidora sigh'd, and would have prest
The hand now pressing hers, but was too weak.
Iris stood oyer her dark hair unseen
While thus Elpenor spake. He lookt into
Eyes that had given light and life erewhile
To those above them, but now dim with tears
And wakefulness. Again he spake of joy
Eternal. At that word, that sad word joy
Faithful and fond her bosom heaved once more:
Her head fell back: and now a loud deep sob
Swelled through the darkened chamber; 't was not hers.

Of this gem of idylls Sidney Colvin says: "The beauty of the dying woman implied, not described; the gentle dealings with her of the unseen messenger of the gods who has placed the sandals about her feet in sleep; the solicitude of the husband who as long as she breathes will speak to her only words of comfort; his worship, which when he would tell her of voices that will greet her beyond the tomb, can find no words to express their sweetness except by calling them "like her own"; the pressure with which she would, but cannot, answer him; the quiver of the heart with which she expires upon the mention

and the idea of joy — for what are those unknown and uncompanioned joys to her? — the bursting of the floodgates of his grief when there is no longer any reason for restraining it; these things are conceived with that depth and chastity of tenderness, that instinctive beauty in pathos, which Landor shares with none but the greatest masters of the human heart.”¹⁾ The poem is a beautiful illustration of Landor’s method of restraint and repression, of the effects of that silence which is more eloquent than words. For as in Homer’s *Iliad* the beauty of Helen is brought home to the reader not by means of a detailed description but through the wonder of the three old men who watch her on the Trojan wall, so Artemidora’s beauty is implied, not described, and Elpenor’s agony brought home not by vehement expression — only one deep sob swelling through the darkened room.

Tennyson received his first instruction in the classics from his father who was a Hebrew and Syriac scholar and perfected himself in Greek in order that he might teach his sons. In later years’ Homer, Pindar and Theocritus are mentioned among his favourite authors, the usual travelling-companions on his longer journeys together with Shakespeare, Milton, Virgil and Horace. Jowett, the Master of Balliol, said of him: “His father before him had been a scholar and he inherited as well as acquired a good, accurate knowledge of Latin and Greek. Yet I seem to remember that he had his favourite classics, such as Homer and Pindar and Theocritus. The books which were chiefly read at Eton more than half a century ago were best known to him, and not those which, since the days of Porson and Hermann, have chiefly occupied the

¹⁾ “Landor” p. 194.

attention of the youth of England. He was also a lover of Greek fragments. But I am not sure whether, in later life, he ever sat down to read consecutively the greatest works of Aeschylus and Sophocles, although he used occasionally to dip into them.¹⁾

The result of Tennyson's constant study of the classics is, that his poetry abounds with classical allusions and quotations, with subtle, semi-conscious imitations, where the passing memory of some ancient author seems to have determined the choice of a word or the turn of a phrase. And allusions, borrowings, imitations, all come from him with an easy grace. He does not attempt to disguise, nor does he obtrude them. They are all assimilated, amalgamated in a body of poetry which is wholly in keeping with them in tone, in colour, in diction — in short in style.

Still, when in the following chapters we attempt an analysis of Tennyson's debt to the great Greek writers, we should be cautious in speaking of borrowings and imitations lest we may be rebuked in the words of the poet himself. Tennyson says: "I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Virgil or Milton, when they adopt the creation of a bygone poet and reclothe it, more or less according to their fancy. But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, bookworms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and little imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he*, too, has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say "Ring the bell" without finding that we have taken it from Sir Philip Sidney,

¹⁾ Personal Recollections by the late Master of Balliol, "Memoir" p. 806.

or to use such a simple expression as the ocean "roars" without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarised it (fact!)”¹⁾.

Yet, on the other hand, these words should not lead us to underestimate Tennyson's debt to ancient Greece. From the *Memoir* we know that he was a studious reader of Homer — that when he and Palgrave were out on their Cornish journey and used to read and talk on the rocky Scilly Isles, *Homer was taken so much for granted* that they did not care to discuss the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Now if we find Tennyson describing an old man

"Spluttering thro' the hedge of splintered teeth"

and compare the striking "hedge of teeth" with “*ἔρηνος ἀδικτων*”, Homer's characteristic phrase, we may safely assume that the familiar Greek expression determined the choice of Tennyson's words. And as an irrefutable proof of his indebtedness to Greece stand the twelve poems dealing with distinctly classical subjects, the *English Idylls* professedly Theocritean in form and the *Morte d'Arthur*, consciously and purposely Homeric, described by its author as a "faint Homeric echo, nothing worth". Of the classical poems Hallam Tennyson says: "I need not dwell on my father's love of the perfection of classical literary art, on his sympathy with the temper of the old world, on his love of the old metres, and on his views as to how the classical subject ought to be treated in English poetry. He purposely chose those classical subjects from mythology and legend which had been before but imperfectly treated, or of which the stories were slight, so that he might have free scope for his imagination, "The Lotos-Eaters", "Ulysses", "Oenone", "The Death of Oenone", "Tiresias", "Demeter and Persephone", "Lucretius". A modern feeling

¹⁾ "Memoir" p. 214, 215.

was to some extent introduced into the themes, but they were dealt with according to the canons of antique art. The blank verse was often intentionally restrained".

And it will be interesting to observe the effects of modern sentiment introduced into Grecian story, to note how far Tennyson has preserved the spirit of the original and where he has deviated in characters and in diction from the Greek myth or legend on which his poetry is based.

Matthew Arnold, next to Milton the most learned of English poets, was a scholar deeply versed in the literature of Greece. Herbert Paul says of him: "Matthew Arnold fulfilled the precepts of Horace. He turned over his Greek models by day and by night. He brought everything to the classical touchstone. "Except" wrote Sir Henry Maine, in a moment of rare enthusiasm, "except the blind forces of nature, nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin". Such was substantially Matthew Arnold's creed, though as his father's son he recognized that Hebraism entered with Hellenism into the structure of the Christian Church." ¹⁾. The difference between Hellenism and Christianity he defines in one of his *Essays on Criticism*, entitled *Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment*. Matthew Arnold compares the pagan with the Christian religious spirit by contrasting a representative hymn of paganism to an early hymn of the Christian Church. After rendering into English the fifteenth Theocritean idyll, that consummate expression of the ideal, cheerful, sensuous pagan life, he places the graceful hymn to Adonis, devoid of any deeper spiritual sense, beside the artless fervent hymn of St. Francis, the Christian's

¹⁾ Herbert Paul. "Matthew Arnold", p. 3.

Canticle of the Sun. “Now the poetry of Theocritus’ hymn is poetry treating the world according to the demand of the senses; the poetry of St. Francis’ hymn is poetry treating the world according to the demand of the heart and of the imagination. The first takes the world by its outward, sensible side; the second by its inward, symbolical side. The first admits as much of the world as is pleasure-giving; the second admits the whole world, rough and smooth, painful and pleasure-giving, all alike, but all transfigured by the power of a spiritual emotion, all brought under a law of supersensual love, having its seat in the soul.”

And after censuring the pagan religion of pleasure as a failure to bring consolation to man and exalting the christian religion of sorrow as a stay to the struggling mass of mankind, Arnold goes on to say:

“The poetry of later paganism lived by the senses and understanding; the poetry of mediaeval Christianity lived by the heart and imagination. But the main element of the modern spirit’s life is neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; it is the imaginative reason. And there is a century in Greek life — the century preceding the Peloponnesian war from about the year 530 to the year 430 B. C. — in which poetry made, it seems to me, the noblest, the most successful effort she has ever made as the priestess of the imaginative reason, of the element by which the modern spirit, if it would live right, has chiefly to live.” And elsewhere he pays this noblest of all tributes to classic studies: “I know not how it is but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce in those who constantly practise it, a steadyng and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience:

they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live."

Matthew Arnold endeavoured to live up to the Greek ideals in the spirit and the style of his literary works. He achieved a signal success in *Sohrab and Rustum* which is thoroughly Homeric in temper and in style, whereas *Merope*, although it lacks the life of its model, is in form the nearest approach to the Attic drama English or any modern literature can show. And of Arnold's style Tucker says: "[It] is marked by his reasoned simplicity of taste, his cultivated appreciation of the delicate aroma of words and the poetical atmosphere of thought. He compasses "the liquid clearness of the Ionian sky". It may be that he lacks "abandon" but his poetical style is perfect, almost too perfect for the general. Than *Mycerinus*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, *Philomela*, *Thyrsis* or *The Strayed Reveller* one can find nothing more absolutely Greek in point of execution, though one may know Greek passages which stir profounder emotional depths"¹⁾.

Swinburne had a felicitous command of the Greek language and in the dedication to *Atalanta* produced flawless Greek verse. This power was rather inborn than acquired, the result of his spontaneous sympathy for Hellas, of the affinity and love of his genius for things Greek. Like Landor Swinburne was an aristocrat and a Hellenist, inspired with a passion for ancient and modern Greece. But he differed from Landor in diction and style, forsaking the classic restraint of the Victorians for the romantic licence of Shelley and Keats. Of his style G. E. Woodberry says. "Swinburne first took the world with melody... This is the peculiar

¹⁾. Op. cit. Ch. I, p. 67.

and arresting poetic gift of Swinburne, the lyrical irridescence of the verse like a mother-of-pearl sea, like a green wave breaking in tempest, like a rainbow spray before the beak of his driving song; it is a marvel that changes but fails not, a witchery of language, a vocal incantation in the rhymes, an enchantment in the mere pour of sound and pause and elision — a purely metrical gift.”¹⁾ But the ideas that are clothed in this rich melodious language are instinct with the very spirit of ancient Greece. For Swinburne’s Hellenism was part of his own being, sprung naturally from the depths of his own soul.

Like Arnold he felt the difference between Hellenism and Christianity, between the pagan religion of pleasure and the Christian religion of pain; and he represented the antithesis between paganism and Christianity as the opposition of the pagan worship of Venus to the Christian adoration of the Mother of God:

¹⁾ G. E. Woodberry: "Swinburne" p.p. 22, 23.

Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth
grew sweet with her name.
For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, and
rejected, but she
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial,
her foot on the sea."

And in whole-hearted preference for the joyful, sensuous paganism he turns away from Christianity with its sorrow and tears, and in his poem *Before a Crucifix* denies all Christian symbolism and vents his wrath on priests, the avowed followers of the Christ. Again, in the *Hymn to Proserpine* he takes as motto the dying words of Julian "Vicisti, Galilaee" and scorns Christ, whose light has dimmed the glory of pagan Greece:

"Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world
has grown grey from thy breath;"

And he prophesies that Christ, too, and his kingdom shall pass away — for the race of gods is like the race of men and

οἵη περ φύλλων γενεή τοῖν δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Swinburne seems to bring back the worship of the pagan Gods, of the Greek forms of old divinity and myth, of Apollo most of all, the Sun-God, the inspiration of all poetry, whose worship is the ever recurring theme of his verse.

And in a later chapter we shall find that it was not only the sensuous beauty of paganism but also the conception underlying the Greek drama of a stern Fate ruling the lives of men and gods, which responding to and strengthening the bent of his genius was adopted by Swinburne into his literary scheme of art and his philosophy of life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK EPIC POETRY. HOMER.

The Homeric epic holds a unique position in the literature of the world. At the very dawn of history we find a set of poems describing human life in its various aspects, introducing man in his various relations, in war and battle or in the homely setting of domestic life — man, no longer in a barbarous state, but possessing a certain refinement and culture, gentle in converse, susceptible to poetry and music, appreciating the fine arts; and these poems are couched in a language which has already completely overcome the primitive rudeness of form and has acquired to the full the infinite flexibility, the mellifluous cadence of the later stages of Hellenic speech.

Says W. E. Gladstone: "The poems of Homer do not constitute merely a great item of the splendid literature of Greece; but they have a separate position, to which none other can approach. They, and the manners they describe, constitute a world of their own; and are severed by a sea of time, whose breadth has not been certainly measured, from the firmly-set continent of recorded tradition and continuous fact. In this sea they lie, as a great island. And in this island we find not merely details of events, but a scheme of human life and character, complete in all its parts. We are introduced to man in every relation of which he is capable; in every one of his arts, devices, institutions; in the entire circle of his ex-

perience. There is no other author whose case is analogous to this.”¹⁾ And, according to Prof. R. C. Jebb: “The capital distinction of Homeric poetry is that it has all the freshness and simplicity of a primitive age — all that we associate with “the childhood of the world”: while on the other hand it has completely surmounted the rudeness of form, the struggle of thought with language, the tendency to grotesque or ignoble modes of speech, the incapacity for equable maintenance of a high level, which belong to the primitive stage in literature. This general character is that which Mr. Matthew Arnold defines in his excellent lectures on translating Homer, when he says that Homer’s style has four principal qualities; it is rapid; plain in thought; plain in diction; and noble.”²⁾

The influence of the Homeric epic is manifest in various forms. Its effect is seen in the large number of translations, both in prose and verse, which, from the Elizabethan era onward, English literature has produced. There is the early rendering of Chapman into which Keats looked with memorable result. Splendid is the tribute of the nineteenth century poet to the ancient genius whose original Greek he could not read:

“Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold,
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene,
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

¹⁾ “Homer” by Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone. (Literature Primers) p. 5.

²⁾ R. C. Jebb: “Introduction to Homer”. p. 12.

When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

It is the appeal it made to Keats which will save Chapman's Homer from oblivion; for the rest it is too Elizabethan, too full of "conceits" — such as Troy "shedding her towers for tears of overthrow" — to reproduce the simple, plain and grand style of the original text.

The next remarkable effort, the Homer of Pope, is also inevitably coloured by its age. Pope, the master of elaborate artificiality, substitutes pomp for simplicity, and endless antitheses for straightforward directness — but with all its faults and its inaccuracy of translation (for Pope was but an indifferent Greek scholar) his version is truly Homeric in one respect: it preserves the rapid movement, the spirited "élan" which is one of the leading features of Homer's style. And how favourably Pope compares with many of his successors, with Cowper, who is too tame, with Lord Derby, with Dr. Maginn, who balladized Homer and with Prof. Newman, whose ballad-rendering provoked the severe criticism of Matthew Arnold and originated the brilliant lectures *On Translating Homer* so full of stimulating remarks and suggestions which retain their freshness and their interest till the present day! On the other hand the faults of Pope's style are thrown into relief by comparison with Tennyson's version of two passages from Homer: the lines about the Trojan watchfires in *Iliad* VIII 542—561 and *Achilles over the Trench* in *Iliad* XVIII 202—231. How well the spirit and the style of the original are preserved in Tennyson's rendering of the Homeric simile of the fires:

"As when in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart:
So many a fire between the ships and stream
Of Xanthos blazed before the towers of Troy,
A thousand on the plain."

But far more than in translations the influence of Homeric poetry is shown in the frequent borrowings by later poets of the peculiar turns of speech, the epithets and above all those wonderful similes which are the distinguishing characteristic of Homer's verse. Says Prof. Jebb: "A literary estimate of Homer owes particular notice to one abounding source of variety, vividness and beauty. The Homeric use of simile is so characteristic, it plays so important a part in the poems, and it has so largely influenced later poetry, that it is well worthy of attentive consideration. The first point to observe is that Homeric simile is not a mere ornament. It serves to introduce something which Homer desires to render exceptionally impressive — some moment, it may be, of peculiarly intense action, — some sight, or sound full of wonder, or terror, or pity, — in a word, something *great*. He wishes to prepare us for it by first describing something similar, only more familiar, which he feels sure of being able to make us see clearly . . ." And after drawing attention to the fact that Homer, once he is secure of the main likeness, will elaborate the simile without any direct reference to the object or scene or action compared — not of course, as an aimless luxuriance but to render the image the more vivid and distinct — Jebb goes on: "The range of Homeric simile is as wide as the life known to the poet. Some

of the grandest images are suggested by fire — especially fire raging in a mountain forest — by torrent, snowstorm, lightning or warring winds. Among animals the lion is remarkable as furnishing no fewer than thirty comparisons to the *Iliad*, — the finest of all, perhaps, being that in which Ajax defending the corpse of Patroclus, is compared to a lion guarding his cubs, who “glares in his strength, and draws down all the skin of his brows, covering his eyes”. (*Il.* XVII 135).¹⁾.

The two great nineteenth century poets whose works pre-eminently abound with reminiscences from Homer are Tennyson and Matthew Arnold.

Tennyson's familiarity with the Homeric epic has been noted in the previous chapter; here we may add that wherever Homer's name occurs in Tennyson's poetry, he is mentioned in terms of the highest respect. In *The Princess*, III he is ranked with Plato and Verulam as one of the highest types of man; in *Parnassus* he is the type of the truly inspired poet; in the Epilogue to *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade* he is the type of lasting fame.

The debt which Tennyson owes to Homer is immense and any attempt to illustrate this debt with completeness is bound at the outset to fall short of its mark.

In the prologue to the *Morte d'Arthur* this poem is playfully described as one of the twelve books of a great epic of King Arthur — twelve books that were “faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth”. The poem, therefore, is consciously and purposely Homeric and the stately opening lines:

“So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea.”

have at once the rapid movement, the grand simplicity of Homer's style.

¹⁾ Op. cit. pp. 26—30. (passim).

Further the Homeric manner is seen in stereotyped epithets such as "bold" in "the bold Sir Bedivere"; in stereotyped lines introducing and concluding speeches; in the words of one speaker being quoted by another — as King Arthur's command "Watch what thou seeëst, and lightly bring me word" quoted by Sir Bedivere as "Watch what I see and lightly bring thee word"; and lastly in repetition of words or even lines in similar situations, as "So strode he back slow to the wounded King," concluding each time Sir Bedivere's failure to throw away the precious brand.

Again we have an imitation of Homer in ll. 88—109:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away" etc.

where Sir Bedivere, after the manner of the Greek and Trojan heroes, gives utterance to an inner conflict in what Jebb calls "audible thought". Compare with this passage certain Homeric speeches introduced by the line:

οὐ θήσας δ' ἄρ' ἔφειπε ποτὶ μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·

In ll. 127-128. where the dying King rebukes Sir Bedivere who would betray him for the precious sword

"Either from lust of gold, or like a girl,
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes."

we have a brief simile after the manner of Homer, whereas we have a more extended one in ll. 136—142:

"The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea."

a simile, which is also truly Homeric in this respect that the image is elaborated without direct reference to the thing compared.

Besides conscious imitations we have perhaps direct

borrowings from Homer in the lines about the making of the sword — lines which the poet himself would quote with pride —

“Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills”

which recall Hephaistos' words in Il. XVIII 400:

τη δὲ παρ' εἰνάκετες χάλκευον δαιδαλα πολλά,

and in the two following lines:

“So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.”

which may be compared with Homer's *ὡς ἄρα τις φείπεσκεν* (Il. IV 85) or again *καὶ ποτέ τις φείπησιν* (Il. VI. 459), whereas the phrase “winning reverence” recalls the statement of Od. VIII 479:

*πᾶσι γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι ἐπιχθονίοισι ἀοιδοί
τιμῆς ἔμμοροί εἰσι καὶ αἰδόος.*

The description of the island-valley of Avilion:

“Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, etc.”

plainly recalls Od. VI 42—45

*ὅδι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ¹⁾
ἔμμεναι, οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται, οὐτε ποτ' ὅμβρῳ
δεύεται, οὔτε χιῶν ἐπιπίλναται,*

or the picture of the Elysian plain in Od. IV 566 ^{1).}

¹⁾ We may also compare Swinburne's picture of the Isles of the Blest:

“Lands indiscernable in the unheard-of west,
Round which the strong stream of a sacred sea
Rolls without wind for ever, and the snow
There shows not her white wings and windy feet,
Nor thunder nor swift rain saith anything,
Nor the sun burns, but all things rest and thrive.”

Atalanta in Calydon.

Moreover, the place is “deep-meadowed” like the
“Ανθεια βαθύλευμος” of Il. IX 151; and its

“bowery hollows crowned with summer sea”
recall Circe’s island (Od. X 195)

νῆσου, τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφανώται.

Lastly it is not impossible that Il. VIII 25—26

σειρὴν μέν κεν ἔπειτα περὶ ρίου Οὐλύμπου
δησαίμην, τὰ δέ κ' αὖτε μετήρα πάντα γένοιτο,

may have suggested the two fine lines:

“For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

And yet, when reading carefully this “faint echo” of the ancient epic, though appreciating its tone and colour, one cannot fail to realise the difference between this nineteenth century poem and its prototype of three thousand years ago. It is the difference between a hothouse plant, carefully tended and cultivated to perfection and a wild flower sprung out of a rich and fertile soil. Tennyson’s epic fragment is not the spontaneous growth of the life and thought of an early people ; it was composed in the study, in an age of advanced civilization, embellished with archaisms and borrowings and conscious imitations, and all those subtle and recondite charms of style that would appeal to the cultivated reader of its day.

The *Morte d’Arthur* was afterwards extended and as *The Passing of Arthur* incorporated with the *Idylls of the King*. And what has been said about the original fragment holds good no less of the whole “Idyllic Epic”¹⁾: it is full not only of conscious imitations, but also of

¹⁾ This name is given to the “Idylls of the King” by J. Churton Collins, who draws an interesting parallel between Tennyson and Theocritus and suggests that the latter may have designed to present the career of Hercules in a series of idylls in much the same way as the Arthurian legends are presented by Tennyson.

direct borrowings from Homer, of similes, phrases, epithets, idioms, transferred from *Odyssey* and *Iliad* alike.¹⁾ We can only mention here some of the more striking parallels: the “blind wave” in *Merlin and Vivien*, recalling the κύμα κωφόν of Il. XIV 16; the line

“He dragged his eyebrow lashes down”

obviously suggested by the beautiful simile of the lion in Il. XVII, to which Jebb draws attention; and the picture in *The Last Tournament* of the churl

“spluttering thro’ the hedge of splintered teeth”

containing the well-known Homeric idiom ἔρκος δδόντων of Il. IV 350, IX 409 a. o.

And we should not forget two similes which are pure Homer in form and spirit, of which the one occurs in *Geraint and Enid*:

“But at the flash and motion of the man
They vanished panic-stricken, like a shoal
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
Come slipping o’er their shadows on the sand,
But if a man who stands upon the brink
But lift a shining hand against the sun,
There is not left the twinkle of a fin
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;
So scared but at the motion of the man,
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl.” etc.

and the other, from *Lancelot and Elaine*,

“They couched their spears and pricked their steeds and thus
Their plumes, driv’n backward by the wind they made

¹⁾ Interesting in this connection is the statement we find in “Memoir” p. 348: “During the winter evenings of 1855 my father would translate the *Odyssey* into Biblical prose to my mother, who writes “Thus I get as much as it is possible to have of the true spirit of the original.”

In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea
Green glimmering toward the summit bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark and overbears the bark
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger."

is obviously borrowed from Il. XV, 381—385.

οἵδ', ὡς τε μέγα κύμα θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο
ηῆς ἵπερ τοῖχων καταβήσεται, ἐππότ' ἐπείγη
Fris ἀνέμοι', — ἢ γαρ τε μάλιστά γε κύματ' ὄφελλει, —
ώς Τρῶες μεγαλη *Fifaxή* κατὰ τεῖχος ἔβαινον.

Other poems rich in allusions to Homer are *The Princess* and — almost of necessity — those dealing with distinctly classical subjects, such as *Oenone*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Sea-Fairies*, *Ulysses*.

The curious expression in the first division of *The Princess*

“then he chew'd
The thrice-turned cud of wrath, and *cooked his spleen*”

is an adaptation from the Homeric phrase χόλου πέσσειν or καταπέσσειν in Il. I 81, IV 513.

The picture in Section II of the Sirens who “chanted on the bleaching bones of men” and the passage in Section IV.

“If indeed there haunt
About the mouldered lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by”,

refer to the story of the Sirens in Od. XII 44 ff.
The passage in Section III

“Settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.”

is a fine commentary on the real meaning of Homer's

γλαυκιάων as applied to an angry lion in Il. XX 172:
γλαυκιάων δ' ἵθις φέρεται μέν.

In Section IV the line:

“Stared with great eyes and laughed with alien lips”
is literally from Od. XX 347

οἵδ' ἥδη γναθμοῖσι· γελοιανού ἀλλοτρίοισι·

and the line:

“And clad in iron burst the ranks of war”
recalls such lines of the *Iliad* as:

τῆμος σφῇ ἀρετῇ Δαναοὶ ρήξαντο φάλαγγας.

In Section V the expression “Ill mother” recalls the δίσμητηρ of Od. XXIII 97.

In Section VII the splendid simile:

“As one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deep, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world.”

is taken from Il. VI 275—278:

ώς δ' ὅτ' ἀπὸ σκοπῆς ἔγιδεν νέφος αἰπόλος ἀνὴρ
ἐρχόμενον κατὰ πόντου ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο Φιωῆς·
τῷ δέ τ' ἀνευθεν ἐόντι μελάντερον ἡέ τε πίσσα
φάίνετ' ίὸν κατὰ πόντου, ἄγει δέ τε λαίλαπα πολλήν· —

In *Oenone* the “topmost Gargarus” is the Γάργυρον ἄκρον of Il. XIV 292, XV 152; the “many-fountained Ida” is the Homeric stock expression “Ιδη πολυπίδαξ” of Il. XIV 157, 283, 307 etc.; the “light-foot Iris” is the Homeric πόδας ὠκέα Φίρις of Il. XVIII 202.

The description of the mountain shepherd,

“Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris”

may have been suggested by Il. III 39.: Δίσπαρι, Φειδός

ἀριστε and the leopard skin that “droop’d from his shoulder” is mentioned in Il. III 17 παρδαλένη ὄμοισιν ἔχων.

The whole of the beautiful passage :

“And at their feet the crocus brake like fire
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro’ and thro’.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.”

is borrowed with one or two alterations and additions from Il. XIV 347—351:

τοῖσι δ' ὑπὸ χθῶν διὰ φύεν νεοθηλέα ποίην.
λωτὸν ἐφερσήεντα ίδε κρόκου ἡδὲ ὑάκινθου
πυκνὸν καὶ μαλακόν, ὃς ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὑψόσ' ἐφεργε.
τῷ ἐν ἐλεξάσθην, ἐπὶ δὲ νεφέλην ἐφέσαντο
καλὴν χρυσείην στιλπναὶ δ' ἀπέπιπτον ἐφερσαι.

Yet it may be observed that for all these reminiscences from Homer the spirit of *Oenone* is entirely un-Homeric; for if we compare this lament of Oenone for her faithless lover with Andromache's farewell to the husband she knows doomed to death, the tumultuous passion of the modern poem stands in marked contrast to the restrained and quiet sadness of the Greek.

The Lotos-Eaters is of course founded on Od. IX 94—97:

τῶν δ' ὅς τις λωτοῖ φάγοι μελιγηδέα καρπόν,
οἰκέτ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι πάλιν ἥθελεν οὐδὲ νέεσθαι
ἄλλ' αἴτοις βούλοντο μετ' ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισι
λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν νόστου τε λαθέσθαι.

And it is interesting to note how, in developing this short story, Tennyson has introduced into the Homeric

material elements of matter and form which are foreign to the Homeric age.

In Homer's account there is no song, no description of the country and its inhabitants; only a brief mention is made of a few facts and of the effect of the fruit upon the Greeks who ate.

Tennyson opens his poem with a detailed description of the lovely land "where all things always seemed the same" and where "all round the coast the languid air did swoon"; then introduces the "mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters", bearing branches of "that enchanted stem" and carefully analyzes the effect of the fruit:

"But whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,

And music in his ears his beating heart did make. etc."

tracing step for step with the accuracy of the modern psychologist the growing dreaminess, inactivity, apathy, forgetfulness barely suggested by the Greek.

Then follows the Choric Song, which, in a manner alien from the "simple", "plain" and "grand" style of Homer produces the effect of sweet music by means of an irregular and intricate and elaborately melodious metre, by repetition and recurring rhyme and a fastidious adaptation of sound to sense.

The Sea-Fairies is clearly based on Od. XII, 184-191.

Δεῦρ' ἄγ' ίών πολύσιν' Ὁδυσεῦ, μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν,
νῆα κατάστησον, ίνα νωτέρην **Φόρ'** ἀκούσῃς.
οὐ γάρ πώ τις τῇδε παρήλασε υπὲ μελαίνη,
πρίν γ' ἔμεων μελίγηρους ἀπὸ στομάτων **Φόρ'** ἀκοῦσαι·
ἀλλ' ἐ γε τερψάμενος νέεται καὶ πλειονα **Φειδώνας.**
Φειδόμεν γάρ τοι πάνθ', ὅσ' ἐνὶ Τροῖη εὑρεῖν
'Αργέσιοι Τρῶές τε θεῶν **Φιότην** ἐμόγησαν·
Φειδόμεν δ', ἵστα γένηται ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρη.

Apart from the charm of the music of which the potency is only suggested by the infatuation of Odysseus, the allurements proffered by the Sirens are merely the promise of greater knowledge and a vague joy.

In Tennyson's poem the fascination of the song is suggested by means of an intricate and irregular metre, by rhyme, repetition, recurring phrase, alliteration, by music of words and a limpid sweetness of sound. Besides, to the Homeric allurement of λαγυρην ἀσιδην he has added the charms of sensual pleasure, of lovely colour and joyous sounds.¹⁾.

The poem *Ulysses* owes its germ, its spirit, its sentiment to the 26th Canto of Dante's *Inferno* but some of the language is distinctly Homeric. "Windy Troy" is the Φίλιος ἡμερόεσσα of Il. XII 115 and XVIII 174; the epithets "my son, mine own" applied to Telemachus recall the φίλος ὑπὸς of Od. II 2 and the "slow prudence" with which he is credited may have been suggested by the epithet πεπνυμένος of Od. I 412.

The lines near the close:

"Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows"

are one of the recurrent lines from the *Odyssey* that gladden the schoolboy's heart:

ἔξῆς δ' εὔσόμενοι πολιὴν ἀλα τύπτουν ἐρετμοῖς.

¹⁾ Miss Eliz. H. Haight to whose interesting article on "Tennyson's Use of Homeric Material" in Poet Lore XII I am greatly indebted for this part of my study, observes that in Homer's version the fascination of the Sirens' song is not developed in rhythm or in words. However, an adaptation of sound to sense is certainly characteristic of Homer, who will suggest the heavy fall of a stone or the rapid motion of the flying chariot by varying the number of long and short syllables of his verse. And allowing for the difficulty of appreciating Greek sounds I would admit the possibility that the lines quoted above — especially line 186 — were suggestive to a Greek of the charm of the Sirens' song. Without, however, pressing this point too far, I may observe that when Tennyson makes the sound answer to the sense he only elaborates a device which Homer and the Greeks had used before.

whereas in the aged hero's purpose

“To sail beyond the sunset, and the *baths*
Of all the western stars,”

we trace the Homeric fancy that all the stars except the Bear are dipt in the “baths of Ocean” as in Il. XVIII 489 and Od. V 275.

οῖη δ' ἄμμυντος ἐστι λοετρῶν Ωκεανοῖο.

It is interesting to note how the influence of Dante has modified the character of the Homeric Ulysses.

The Ulysses of Homer is πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς, wise and prudent as statesman and warrior, the man of practical affairs and practical knowledge, skilled in many devices and full of cunning plans.

Tennyson has improved on the Homeric conception by making Ulysses a man of unrest, who cannot bear to stay “an idle king” “among these barren crags”; a man of active sentience who has “enjoyed greatly” and “suffered greatly”; a man who reflects on his experiences and on his part in the universe; a man of intellectual ambition who craves

“To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought”

a man with a love of good, who hopes that

“Something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done.”

It is in his sailing to the west in pursuit of virtue and of knowledge that Tennyson's Ulysses betrays the influence of Dante¹⁾; it is his habit of introspection, his curious analysis of his own motives of action which makes this modern Ulysses as unlike the Ulysses of Homer as the complex life of the nineteenth century differs from the simple life of the Homeric age.

¹⁾ Dante “Inferno” XXVI 120 “Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza”.

Once, however, Tennyson has exactly reproduced the Homeric spirit, when in his *Dream of fair Women* the "Lady of the Iliad" appears in all her simple dignity and charm. His description, it is true, is un-Homeric, for he presents a definite picture instead of merely suggesting her loveliness and grace; but the words expressing her feeling for the restless fate which has worked through her life have a Homeric echo in their simplicity:

"No one can be more wise than destiny."

And her last words:

"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
Then, when I left my home."

plainly recall Iliad VI 345—348:

ώς μ' ὄφελ' ἥματι τῷ, ὅτε με πρῶτον τέκε μήτηρ
οἴχεσθαι προφέρουσα κακὴ ἀνέμοιο θύελλα
εἰς δρός ἡ ἐις κῦμα πολυφλοισθεοί θαλάσσης,
ἔνθα με κῦμ' ἀπέφερσε, πάρος τάδε φέργυχ γενέσθαι!

In his lectures *On Translating Homer* Matthew Arnold said: "It has more than once been suggested to me that I should translate Homer. This is a task for which I have neither the time nor the courage; but the suggestion led me to regard yet more closely a poet whom I had already studied, and for one or two years the works of Homer were seldom out of my hands."

The result of this close study of the Homeric epics is apparent in the poem *Sohrab and Rustum*, a blank verse story of Central Asia, which been called the most faithful Homeric echo in English speech.

Nowhere else in English literature do we find a better illustration of those Homeric qualities which Arnold himself most accurately defined and indicated in his

lectures: majesty, simplicity, rapidity and radiance. A close examination of the poem will show not only how much Arnold has adopted from Homer but also his complete absorption of the Homeric manner and the skill and felicity with which he has woven detached Homeric phrases and passages drawn from various parts of the epics into an independent, consistent and harmonious whole.

Following the poem from the beginning we find the lines:

... "the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed."

to bear a close resemblance to Il. XXIV 2—5:

τοὶ μὲν δόρποι' ἐμέδοντο
ὕπνου τε γλυκεροῦ ταρπήμεναι, αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
'κλαίει φίλοι' ἑτάρου μεμυῆμενος, οὐδέ μιν ὕπνος
ἥρε πανδαμάτωρ, ἀλλ' ἐστρέφετ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.

and also to Il. X 1—4.

The line:

"And Sohrab came there and went in, and stood"

is Homeric in presenting a situation by a group of three specific statements, while the verses just below

"And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms."

recall Il. X 73—75:

τὸνδ' ηὗρεν παρά τε κλισίη καὶ νῆι μελαίνη
εὖη ἔνι μαλακῇ παρὰ δ' ἔντεκ ποκιλ' ἔκειτο,
ἀσπίς καὶ δύο δοῦρε φαεινή τε τρυφάλεια.

The passage:

Let the two armies rest; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man.

shows the influence of Il. VII 48—51:

ἄλλους μεν κάθεσον Τρῶας καὶ πάντας Ἀχαιούς,
αὐτὸς δὲ προκάλεσσαι Ἀχαιῶν ἐς τις ἄριστος
ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δηιστῆτι

The remonstrance:

"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us."

is not very different from that in Il. III 60:

αἰεὶ τοι κραδίη πέλεκυς ὡς ἔστιν ἀτειρής.

and in Il. XX 376—377:

"Εκτόρ, μηκέτι πάμπαν Ἀχιλλῆι προμάχιζε,
ἀλλὰ κατὰ πληθὺν τε καὶ ἐν φλοίσβοιο δέδεξο,

whereas the phrase "the battle's common chance," may be compared with *ὑμοίος πτολέμοιο* of Il. XIII 358, 635 and XVIII 242.

The passage:

"And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;"

resembles Il. X 21—24:

ὅρθωθεῖς δ' ἐνέδυνε περὶ στήθεσσι χιτῶν,
ποσσὶ δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα,
ἀμφὶ δ' ἐπειτα δαφοινὸν ἐγέσσατο δέρμα λέοντος,
αἴθωνος μεγάλοιο ποδημενές· εἶλετο δ' ἔγχος.

The simile:

"From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
As when some grey November morn the files
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian rede-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board — so they stream'd."

has much in common with the simile in Il. II 459—465:

τῶνδ', ὡς τ' ὄρνιθων πετεηνῶν **φέθνει πολλά,**
χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἢ κύκνων δολιχοδείρων
Ἄστιφ ἐν λειμῶν Καῦστρίου ἀμφὶ ρέεθροι
ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα πέτωνται ἀγχολόμενα πτερύγεσσι,
κλαυγγῆδον προκαθίζονταν, σμαρχεῖ δέ τε λειμῶν,
ὡς τῶν **φέθνει πολλὰ** νεῶν ἅπο καὶ κλισίαν
εἰς πεδίον προχέοντο **Σκαμάνδριον.**

And another beautiful simile:

"As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearléd ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy —
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved."

seems to be a combination of Il. XXIII 597—600 and Il. II 147—149:

τοῖο δὲ θυμὸς
ἴανθη, ὡς εἴ τε περὶ σταχύεσσιν ἐφέρσῃ
λήιον ἀλδήσκοντος, ἐπει φρίστωσιν ἄρσυραι.
ὡς ὄρχη σοι, Μενέλαε, μετὰ φρεσὶ θυμὸς οἴανθη.

ὡς δ' ἐτε κινήσῃ Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λήιον ἐλθών,
λάβρος ἐπανγίζων, ἐπὶ τ' ἡμένη ἀσταχύεσσι,
ὡς τῶν πᾶσ' ἀγορή 'κινήθη.

The passage:

"And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarra came,
And Feraburg, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said:"

is similar to the counsel scene in Il. II 404—409.

The long passage:

"But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd

Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.

And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum;

. and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,

And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd and saw him stand,
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands and said: —
“Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.

What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.”

has much in common with the story of the embassy of Odysseus and Ajax to Achilles, who is found enjoying the “clear-toned lyre” (Il. IX 182—198); whereas at the same time it reflects the Homeric custom of first entertaining guests and then questioning them, as illustrated by Od. III 67—70.

The passage:

“And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armour up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man.”

portrays defenceless old age in the same spirit as Od. XI 494—503, where Achilles' lament in the underworld is given: “And tell me of noble Peleus, if thou hast heard aught, whether he still has honour among the host of the Myrmidons, or whether men do him dishonour throughout Hellas and Phthia, because old age binds him hand and foot: For I am not there to bear him aid beneath the rays of the sun in such strength as once was mine in wide Troy, when I slew the best of the host in defence of the Argives. If but

in such strength I could come, were it but for an hour, to my father's house, I would give many a one of those who do him violence and keep him from his honour, cause to rue my strength and my invincible hands.”¹⁾

We may also compare Od. XI 187—196; XXIV 226—231; Il. XVIII 434—435; XIX 334—337; XXIV 540—551.

In the line:

“And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more.”
the expression “slaughterous hands” is the same as Homer's *χεῖρας ἀνδροφόνους* of Il. XVIII 317; XIII 18; XXIV 479.

The simile:

“And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare —
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.”

is a close imitation — although the situation is different — of Il. XI 67—71:

οἵ δ', ὡς τ' ἀμητῆρες ἐνυπτίοι ἀλλήλοισι
σύμμον ἐλκύνωσιν ἀνδρὸς μάκρος κατ' ἄρουραν
πυρῶν ἦ κριθῶν, τὰ δε δράγματα ταρφέα πίπτει,
ὡς Τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοί, ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες
δήμους, οὐδ' ἔτεροι 'μνάσοντ' ὀλοστο φόβοιο.

The lines:

“And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said: —
may be compared with Il. I. 500—501:

καὶ ἢ πάροιδ' αὔτοῖς καθέζετο καὶ λαβε γούνων
σκηῆ.

and with Il. VI 253:

Ἐν τ' ἄρα Ιοὶ φῦ χειρὶ φέπος τ' ἔφετ' ἐν τ' ὀνόμαξε.

¹⁾ English Translation by A. T. Murray (Loeb's Classical Library.)

The scene in which Rustum ponders on the probable consequences of a reconciliation with Sohrab recalls the episode of Glaucus and Diomedes in Il. VI 212—229.

The lines:

“ . . . and proffer courteous gifts
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.”

are an echo of Il. VI 218—220:

οἵ δὲ καὶ ἀλλήλοισι πόρου ἔειναια καλά·
Φοινές μὲν ζωστῆρα δίδου φοίνικι φρεινόν,
Βελλεροφόντης δὲ χρύσεων δέπτας ἀμφικύπελλον.

In the line:

“Rash boy, men look on Sohrab's face and flee!”
the word “rash” recalls the Homeric *σχετλίος* as used
in Il. III 414; Od. IX 494; XII 21, etc.

The long passage:

“He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurled
His spear; and Sohrab saw it come
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide; — then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough — like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
. so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; and again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.”

shows Arnold's skill in combining various Homeric elements, with much that is original, into a harmonious whole. The Homeric passages here laid under contri-

bution are Il. XXII 273—276; (XIII 402—405; XVII 525—526;) VII 258—269; XVI 139—144; Od. IX 319—324.

The lines:

“Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum’s deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace ‘twixt thee and me!”

again recall Il. VI 212—229:

ὣς ’φάτ, ἐγήθησεν δὲ βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομῆδης.

ἔγχος μὲν κατέπηξεν ἐνι χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ
αὐτὰρ ὁ μειλιχίοισι προσηύδα ποιμένικ λαῶν

“ἢ ρά νύ μοι ἔτενος πατρώιός ἐσσι παλαιός”

· · · · ·
ἔγχει δ’ ἀλλήλων ἀλεώμεθα καὶ δι ἐμίλου·
πολλοὶ μὲν γάρ ἐμοὶ Τρῶες κλειτοὶ τ’ ἐπίκουροι
κτενέμεν’, ἐν κε θέος γε πόρη καὶ ποσσὶ καχήν,
πολλοὶ δ’ αὖ σοι Ἀχαιοὶ ἐναιρέμεν’, ἐν κε δύνηαι.”

The passage:

“Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers.”

may be compared with Il. XXII 26—31:

· · · · · ὥς τ’ ἀστέρ·
· ὃς ρά τ’ ὀπώρης εῖσιν, ἀριζῆλοι δέ φοι αἰγαῖ
φάίνουσται
λαμπρότατος μὲν ṿ γ’ ἔστι, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται,
καὶ τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δρειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.

Rustum’s scornful words:

“Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valour; try thy feints

And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks and thy girl's wiles."

are an adaptation of Il. XXII 261—267:

"Εκτορ, μή μοι, ἀλαστέ, συνημοσύνας ἀγόρευε.

παντοίης ἀρετῆς μιμησκεο· νῦν σε μάλι χρὸν
αἰχ μητήν τ' ἔμμεναι καὶ θαρσαλέον πολεμιστήν.

The splendid passage:

"And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom the twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And labouring breath."

was suggested by Il. XVII 366—377:

ώς οἱ μὲν ἀράχνητο δέμας πυρός, οὐδέ κε φαίνει
οὔτε ποτ' ἡλίου σάου ἔμμεναι οὔτε σελήνην·
ἡέρι γάρ κατέχοντο μάχη ἐν τοῖσι ἄριστοι
ἔστασαν ἀμφὶ Μενοιτιάδῃ κατατεθνῶτι.
οἱ δ' ἄλλοι Τρῶες καὶ ἔγκυνήμιδες Ἀχαιοὶ
εὑκηλοὶ πολέμιζον ὑπ' αἰθέρι, πέπτατο δ' αὔγὴ
ἡελίοι ὅξεια, νέφος δ' οὐ φαίνετο πάσης
γαῖας οὐδὲ ὁρέων.

τοὶ δ' ἐν μέσῳ ἀλγεῖ ἔπασχον
ἡέρι καὶ πολέμω, τείρουντο δὲ μηλέι χαλκῷ
ἔστοι ἄριστοι ἔσταν.

Sohrab's words:

— “Yet thy fierce boast is vain
Thou didst not slay me, proud and boastful man!

No! Rustum slays me and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing here,
But that beloved name unnerved my arm —
.
.
.
.
.
and thy spear transfix'd an unarmed foe."

are plainly a free adaptation of Patroclos' dying words in Il. XVI 844—850.

Sohrab's lament:

"Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows grey
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords,
. Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done."

recalls Hector's sad farewell in Il. VI 450—455 and his prayer for young Astyanax in 479—482.

In the passage:

"The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die —"

we trace the Homeric conception that death follows immediately on the removal of the spear, the soul departing from the body through the wound, as illustrated by Il. XVI 502—505.

The simile contained in the lines:

"Then with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd-a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase.
An emperor's gift — at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp

Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal."

has been compared for its verbal similarity as well as for the Homeric addition of picturesque details to Il. IV 141—147:

ώς δ' ἔτε τίς τ' ἐλέφχυτα γυνὴ φοίνικι μήνῃ
Μηνοῖς ἡς Κάειρχ, παρήσιν ἔμμεναι ἵππων,
κεῖται δ' ἐν Θαλάμῳ, πολέες τέ μιν ἡρήσαντο
ἵππης φορέειν, βασιλῆι δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,
ἄμφοτερον κόσμος δ' ἵππω ἐλατῆρι τε κύδος,
τοιοι τοι, Μενέλαος, μάνθην αἴματι μηροὶ¹
εὑφνέες κυνῆμαχί τε ιδὲ σφυρὰ κάλ' ὑπένερθε.

The description of Rustum's grief for his son resembles the picture of Achilles mourning for his friend; the "mute woe" of Sohrab's horse, Ruksh, recalls the grief of Achilles' horses over Patroclos' death.

Sohrab's words:

— "I but meet to-day

The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven."

reveal a belief in fatalism which occurs frequently in Homer, as in Od. VII 196—198; Il. III 308—309; VI 487—489; XVI 441—442; XX 127—128.

Rustum's lament:

"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"

was evidently influenced by Helen's "gentle words" in Il. VI 345—348, quoted above to illustrate Tennyson's adaptation.

The passage:

"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,

And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave."

affords another illustration of the skill and felicity with which Arnold has combined detached Homeric passages into an independent and consistent whole. In accordance with the Homeric manner this speech of Rustum's is a repetition, "mutatis mutandis", of the words of Sohrab, the other party to the dialogue. The Homeric passages drawn upon are Il. XXIV 669—670; XXII 352—353; XVI 671—675:

"έσται τοι καὶ ταῦτα, γέρον Πρίαμ', ὡς σὺ κελεύεις·
σχήσω γὰρ πόλεμον τόσσου χρόνου ἔσσου ἀνωγας."

οὐδ' ὡς σέ γε πότνια μήτηρ
ἐνθεμένη λεχέεσσι γοήσεται, ὃν τέκεν αἰτή,

πέμπε δέ μιν πομπεῖσιν ἄμα κρηπινοῖσι φέρεσθαι,
"Τυνω καὶ Θανάτῳ διδυμάσσιν, οἵ τα μιν ὥκκ
θήσουσ' ἐν Δυκίνῃ εὐρέινς πίσιν δήμῳ,
ἔνθα γε ταρχύσουσι καστίγνητοι τε γέται τε
τύμβῳ τε στήλῃ τε· τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἔστι θανόντων."

We may also compare Il. XI 371; XVI 457; XVII 434—435; Od. XII 14—15. The expression "that lovely earth" recalls Homer's frequent use of ἔρατεινός, applied to countries and cities, as in Od. VII 79: Σχερίνη ἔρατεινήν; and in Il. III 239: Λακεδαιμονος ἔξ ἔρατεινής.

The description of Sohrab's death:

"Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom and this delightful world."

recalls Homer's description of the dying Patroclos in Il. XVI 855—857:

ὁς ἄρα μιν **γειπόντα τέλος θανάτοι'** ἐκάλυψε·
ψυχὴ δ' ἐν ρεθέων πταμένη "Α**Γιδόσδ'** ἐβεβίκει,
Γὰν πότμου γάσσουσα, λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην.

Though far less frequent than in *Sohrab and Rustum* Homeric echoes are also found in Matthew Arnold's *Balder Dead*. Herbert Paul draws attention to the following speech of Balder:

"Hermod the nimble, gild me not my death!
Better to live a serf, a captured man,
Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,
Than to be crown'd king here, and rule the dead."

which bears close resemblance to Achilles' words, Od. XI 488—491:

μὴ δὴ μοι θάνατόν γε παραίδα, φαιδίμ' Ὀδυσσεῖ.
Βουλούμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν' ἄλλῳ,
ἀνδρὶ πάρ' ἄκληρῷ, ὃ μὴ βίστος πολὺς εἴη,
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι παταφθιμένοισι **γανάσσειν**.

For further illustrations of Homeric influence in *Balder Dead* the reader is referred to Prof. W. P. Mustard's *Homeric Echoes in Arnold's "Balder Dead"* ("Studies in Honor of Basil L. Gildersleeve." 19—28.)

CHAPTER V.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK LYRIC POETRY.

Whereas epic poetry is concerned with the outward world, lyric poetry is the outcome of inner experience and belongs to a later stage of culture, when man has grown conscious of the world of hopes and fears, desires and passions within his breast. Lyric poetry deals with the boundless range of human feelings and is valuable in proportion as it expresses with power or pathos some real or imagined passion of the writer which the world at large can also recognize for its own.

It was in the years between 750—500 B.C., as with political changes man's knowledge and experience were widening, that the new form of poetry arose in ancient Greece. Greek lyric or melic poetry was meant to be sung, so that words and music formed a single work of art. Yet the musical accompaniment was only what Plutarch¹⁾ calls the "seasoning" of the words. We may therefore console ourselves for our ignorance of Greek music with the reflection that, as far as our lyric fragments go, we possess the essential, the statue, although we lack the colour which was an added beauty to the Greeks.

Greek lyric poetry was Aeolian and Dorian, and the different characters of the Aeolian and Dorian States have pressed their marks on the two kinds of lyric song. "The Aeolian State", says Jebb, "was frequently shaken by fickle and fiery passion: it was indeed the storm-driven ship to which Alcaeus likened it... Party strife was restless in the island.

¹⁾ Symp. 7, 8.

The nobles, whose power was not seldom threatened or overthrown by the commons, lived a life of stormy excitement, of love and war, of luxury and hardship, of haughty dominion or homeless exile. These changes, like sunlight and shadow flitting over a summer sea, were mirrored in their Lyric Poetry. It had a rapid flow, a gay careless grace often lit up by a sudden glow of passion, and a wonderful melody. The Aeolian ode was usually meant to be sung by a single voice and was on a light and simple plan, suited to the swift and burning utterance of the poet's mood."¹⁾

One of the great Aeolian singers was Alcaeus, who wrote hymns to the gods, drinking-songs, songs of war and love, but of whose poetry only a few fragments are left; some of these are written in the so-called *Alcaic stanza*, of which Tennyson has given an English specimen in the following lines:

"O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
O skilled to sing of time or eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages."

Two lines link his name with another no less famous:

(fr. 55)²⁾ Ἰόπλος' ἄγνα μελλιχόμειδε Σάπφοι,
Σέλω τι φείπην, ἀλλά με κωλύει αἴδως.

Sappho of Lesbos, in her own melodious words

πέρροχος ὡς ἔτ' ἀοιδος ὁ Λέσβιος ἀλλοδάποισιν

was a woman of surpassing artistic genius, exquisitely sensitive to the harmonies of form and sound, who expressed her intense and passionate inner life in her poetry, writing from "the real blood of her heart and the real flame of her thought." "Her exquisite

¹⁾ "Primer of Greek Literature" p. 58.

²⁾ The numbers are those of the third edition of Bergk.

love-lyrics strike and sting the memory in lonely places, or at sea, among all loftier sights and sounds . . . seem akin to fire and air, being themselves all air and fire.”¹⁾ The metres used by Sappho are simple, of a simplicity that veils the most consummate art. One of her metres, the *Sapphic* stanza, has been preserved in the genuine Greek cadence in the following lines written at the request of Prof. Jebb by Tennyson:

“Faded every violet, all the roses,
Gone the glorious promise, and the victim
Broken in his anger of Aphrodite
Yields to the victor.”

The third of the great Aeolians, Anacreon of Teos, wrote gem-like little songs of love and joy and wine, which have been translated by Cowley and Thomas Moore and have become the prototypes of those graceful trifles called *Vers de Société* and of the songs of love and gaiety of the seventeenth century Cavaliers. The collection of spurious *Anacreonta* are probably all of the Christian era, many as late as 500 A. D.

Whereas the Aeolian State resembled a storm-tossed vessel, the Dorian “was anchored to the steadfast faith of the Dorian people in their gods and in the usages handed down by their fathers. A stamp of severe symmetry and majesty belonged to the rites of the Dorian religion, to the Dorian temples and statues and poems. Dorian Lyric Poetry was the expression of Dorian life in all its public and social energies. The Dorian lyrast, unlike the Aeolian, says little of himself . . . In its most distinctive form, Dorian Lyric Poetry was meant to be sung, not by a single voice, but by a chorus.”²⁾

Alcman of Sparta wrote hymns, paeans and “parthenia”,

¹⁾ Swinburne: “Notes on Poems and Reviews.”

²⁾ Op. cit. pp. 61, 62.

and was the first to give to the choral lyric an artistic form by division into “strophe” and “antistrophe”, answering to the balanced movements of the chorus to left and right.

Simonides of Ceos, writer of hymns, paeans, dirges, epitaphs and public odes is distinguished by the perfect purity of his style, by his unerring sense of symmetry and proportion, by the Greek culture and refinement revealed in his art. That he lived under special divine guardianship and protection is narrated by Wordsworth in the following lines:

“I find it written of Simonides
That travelling in strange countries, once he found
A corpse that lay exposed upon the ground,
For which, with pains, he caused due obsequies
To be performed, and paid all holy fees.
Soon after this man’s ghost unto him came,
And told him not to sail, as was his aim.
On board a ship, then ready for the seas.
Simonides, admonished by the ghost,
Remained behind: the ship the following day
Set sail, was wrecked, and all on board were lost.
Thus was the tenderest Poet that could be
Who sang in ancient Greece this moving lay,
Saved out of many by his piety.”

(1803)

The poem is interesting, as Prof. Mackail in his *Lectures on Poetry* has pointed out, not only because it shows the strong attraction the ancient poet exercised over the modern, but also, because, like a good deal of Wordsworth’s finest work, it is written in something very near the Simonidean style.

Pindar, the “Theban eagle”

“Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro’ the azure deep of air,”^{1).}

¹⁾ Gray: “Progress of Poesy.”

is the grandest of the great lyrists of Greece.

In strength, nobility, imagination, in stateliness, dignity, in technical skill he bears the palm of lyric poets of ancient and modern times. Yet the feelings inspired by the perusal of Pindar's poetry are rather those of awe and wonder than of genuine sympathy and pure delight. "At one moment, borne on by the rush of his language, we feel as if there was never any poetry like it; at another, we are merely dazzled and fatigued, and the impression he gives in the original is of something grotesque and almost monstrous.... The science of his art never fails him. He handles great rhythmical masses with absolute mastery and precision. But we ache in this whirl of sound for the vox humana" (Mackail).

The Pindaric Ode with its regular arrangement of strophe, antistrophe, epode is constructed on a system of stringent metrical laws. To this question of form we shall return near the end of this chapter when some kinds of Pindarics in English poetry will be discussed. Suffice it to say for the present that among English poets no exact or very near parallel to Pindar can be found. Gray, who in *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy* observed the strict laws of Pindaric hymnology, was said by Mason to possess Pindar's fire; Cowley's tombstone calls him "the English Pindar"; but neither statement is justified by fact. For all that it is certain, as Tucker observes, "that over all modern lyric poets, even over those who could not always follow his meaning, Pindar has exercised the sway of a master and imperial spirit." And in Jebb's eloquent words: "The glory of his song has passed for ever from the world with the sound of the rolling harmonies on which it once was borne, with the splendour of rushing chariots and athletic forms around which it threw its radiance, with the white-pillared cities by

the Aegean or Sicilian sea in which it wrought its spell, with the beliefs or joys which it ennobled; but those who love his poetry, and who strive to enter into its high places, can still know that they breathe a pure and bracing air, and can still feel vibrating through a clear calm sky the strong pulse of the eagle's wings as he soars with steady eyes against the sun."

Among nineteenth century poets Tennyson especially was a lover of Greek fragments and reflections from the lyrists are scattered through his works. In a letter to James Spedding (1834) he says: "I have written several things since I saw you, some emulative of the ἥδι καὶ βραχὺ καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὲς¹⁾ of Alcaeus, others of the ἐκλογὴ τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ τῆς συνθέσεως ἀκρίβεια of Simonides."

The influence of these early studies may perhaps be traced in some poems of a later date. We quoted above the Alcaics to Milton, which the poet himself annotated in the following way: "My Alcaics are not intended for Horatian Alcaics, nor are Horace's Alcaics the Greek Alcaics, nor are his Sapphics, which are vastly inferior to Sappho's, the Greek Sapphics. The Horatian Alcaic is perhaps the stateliest metre in the world except the Virgilian hexameter at its best; but the Greek Alcaic, if we may judge from the two or three specimens left, had a much freer and lighter movement: and I have no doubt that an old Greek, if he knew our language, would admit my Alcaics as legitimate . . ." ²⁾)

¹⁾ On this passage Mustard ("Classical Echoes in Tennyson." Ch. II p. 21. Note 1.) remarks: "This is a misquotation from memory of what Dionysius of Halicarnassus says of Alcaeus: 'Αλκαιὸν δε σκόπει τὸ μεγαλοφύες καὶ βραχὺ, καὶ ἥδι μετὰ δεινότητος (Reiske's edition vol. V p. 421). Nor is the quotation about Simonides quite accurate."

²⁾ "Memoir" p. 425.

The winter scene in *In Memoriam* CVII — the contrast between the ice and snow without and the good cheer and blazing fire within:

“. . . . Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

. . . . the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;”

may have been adapted from Alcaeus, fr. 34.¹⁾

Τει μὲν ὁ Ζεύς, ἐκ δ' ὄράνω μέγχει
χείμων, πεπάγασσι δ' ὕδαταν ρέοι
· · · · ·
κάββαλλε τὸν χείμων', ἐπὶ μὲν τίθεις
πῦρ, ἐν δὲ κίρναις σῖνον ἀφειδέως
μέλιχρον.

The noble passage in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* about the “toppling crags of Duty” may have been developed from the fancy in Simonides, fr. 58, that “Virtue dwells upon rocks that are hard to scale.” —

δυσαμβάτοις ἐπὶ πέτραις.

The path of duty is, to be sure, proverbially steep and difficult and similar expressions occur in ancient and modern writers, of which we only mention “the steep and thorny way to heaven” of Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I. III. 48.

To Sappho Tennyson refers in *The Princess*, II, where

¹⁾ Compare also Horace's imitation in Ode I 9.

she is mentioned among the famous women who “in art of grace . . . vied with any man.”

Her second ode, the famous “congress of passions” :¹⁾

Φάίνεται μοι κῆνος ἵσος θέοισιν
ἔμμεν ὥνηρ ὅστις ἐνυκτίος τοι
ἰζάνει, καὶ πλασίου ἄδυ φωνεύ -
σας ὑπακούει

καὶ γελαίσας ἴμερόεν, τό μοι μάχη
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόασεν·
ώς γάρ εὐιδέν βροχέως σε, φώνας
οὐδὲν ἔτ’ εἴκει·

ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲν γλώσσα ἔχει, λεπτον δ'
αὐτικα χρῶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμακεν,
ὅππάτεσσι δ' οὐδὲν ὅρημ', ἐπιρρόμ -
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι.

ἀ δὲ μίδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δέ
παισκν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ πολας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλιγω 'πιδεύης
φάνομαι.

of which the English version by Henry F. Wharton reads: “That man seems to me peer of gods, who sits in thy presence, and hears close to him thy sweet speech and lovely laughter; that indeed makes my heart flutter in my bosom. For when I see thee but a little, I have no utterance left, my tongue is broken down, and straightway a subtle fire has run under my skin, with my eyes I have no sight, my ears ring, sweat pours down, and a trembling seizes all my body; I am paler than grass and seem in my madness little better than one dead” — has been paraphrased by Tennyson in the closing section of *Eleänoe*:

“I watch thy grace; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face;

1) Longinus. “On the Sublime” c. 10.

And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly; soon
From thy rose-red lips *my name*
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth;
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee;" etc.

The influence of the same Greek lyric may be traced in Tennyson's *Fatima*:

"Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame," etc.

When *Fatima* was first published the motto prefixed was the opening line of Sappho's ode.

The passage in the *Leonine Elegiacs*:

"The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all
things bringeth,
Soothing the wearied mind: bring me my love, Rosalind,"
and the line in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*:

"Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home
of all good things,"

allude to the lines of Sappho, 95:

Φέσπερε, πάντα φέρων ὅσα ϕάνιολις ἐσκέδασ' χῖως,
φέρεις οὖν, φέρεις αἴγα, φέρεις ἄπου ματέρι παιδα. —

Lastly *Mariana*, though avowedly suggested by Shakespeare, may have been influenced by Sappho, 52:

Δέδυκε μὲν ἀ σελάννα
καὶ Πληγίαδες, μέσαι δέ
νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὄρα,
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω.

The song in *The Miller's Daughter*, 169—186 recalls the twenty-second ode of the Anacreontea. The English lover would be the jewel that trembles in her ear,¹⁾ “the girdle about her dainty waist”, “the necklace upon her balmy bosom”, as the Greek would be “a band for her breasts and a pearl on her neck” —

καὶ ταῦτη δὲ μαστῶν
καὶ μάργαρου τραχήλῳ.

Alcman's description of the halcyon, ἀλιπόρφυρος εῖαρος ὄρνις. (fr. 26) — “the sea-purple, or sea-shining bird of Spring”, suggested “the sea-blue bird of March” in *In Memoriam* XCI.

To Pindar Tennyson refers in *The Princess*, III as “the bearded Victor of ten thousand hymns”. In the lines “To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield”

“Σκιᾶς ὄνχρο — dream of a shadow — go,”

the quotation is from Pyth. VIII 135:

σκιᾶς ὄνχρο ἀνθρώπως — “a dream of a shadow is man.”

In *In Memoriam* LXXV:

“And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise,”

we have Pindar's phrase ὅρες ὑμνων. Pyth. IV 5.

The passage in *Sea Dreams*:

“my poor venture but a fleet of glass
Wrecked on a reef of visionary gold,”

has been compared with Pindar's fragment, Scol. IX, “and on a sea of golden wealth we all alike go sailing toward an unreal strand.” —

πελάγει δ'έν πολυχρύσοις πλούτου
πάντες ἵστη νέομεν ψευδῆ προς ἀκτάν.

¹⁾ Cp. also Shakespeare, “Romeo and Juliet.” II II. 24.

From the *Memoir* we know that Tennyson especially admired "the great picture of the life of Heaven" in the second Olympian ode, and the picture of the Elysium in Hades in the threnody *τοῖσι λάμπει μέν*. To the first of these Greek poems Tennyson alludes in the description of the "flowery levels underneath the crag" in *The Princess*, III:

"for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun."

With these lines we may compare Pindar's picture, Ol. II 70: "Then whosoever... have restrained their souls from all iniquity, travel the road of Zeus unto the tower of Kronos: there round the islands of the blest the Ocean-breezes blow, and golden flowers are glowing,"¹⁾ etc.

And the concluding verses to *Tiresias* are almost a translation from Pindar's famous threnody:

*καὶ τοὶ μὲν ἵπποις γυμνήσιοις <τε>, τοὶ δὲ πεσσοῖς,
τοὶ δὲ φορμίγγεσσι τέρπουται, παρὰ δέ σφισιν
εὐανθῆς ἀπας τέθαλεν ὅλβος·
ὁδμὰ δ' ἕρχτον κατὰ χῶρον κιδνατκι
αἰεὶ θύα μηγνύντων πυρὶ τηλεφρυνεῖ παντοῖχ θεῶν
ἐπὶ βωμοῖς.
ἔνθεν τὸν ἄπειρον ἐρεύγονται σκότου
βληχροὶ δυσφερᾶς νυκτὸς ποταμοὶ . . .*

Compare Tennyson's lines:

"and these eyes will find
The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
About the goal again, and hunters race
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
In height and prowess more than human, strive

¹⁾ Translation of E. Myers.

Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic ears
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire."

When a boy, Swinburne was devoted to the Eton *Poetae Graeci*, on which was founded his passion for Sappho, which lasted through life and grew stronger with the years. This sympathy, combined with his marvellous metrical skill, enabled the poet to master the Sapphic metre and produce a succession of Sapphic stanzas with the genuine ring and cadence of the Greek:

"All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips; and I too,
Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder
Shone Mytilene;" etc.

There is a reminiscence in these lines of Sappho's ode to Aphrodite, which has inspired large portions of Swinburne's *Anactoria*, that monument in "a baser and later language" to the "divine words which even when a boy [he] could not but recognize as divine."

In *Notes on Poems and Reviews* the poet says: "The keynote which I have here touched was struck long since by Sappho. Here and there, I need not say, I have rendered into English the very words of Sappho." But in rendering Sappho, Swinburne has done what modern translators almost inevitably do: he has dilated and diluted the pregnant Greek phrases and travestied with gorgeous rhetoric the exquisite simplicity of Sappho's lines.

On Sappho's first ode:

Ποικιλόθρον' ἀθάνατ' Ἀφρόδιτα,
παῖ Δίος, δολόπλοκε, λίστομαι σε,
μή μ' ἄσαισι μήτ' ἐνίκισι δάμνυκ,
πέτυκα, θύμον·

ἀλλὰ τυῖδ' ἔλθ', αἴποτα κάτέρωτα
τᾶς ἔμαξι αὔδως ἀίσισα πήλιν
ἔκλινες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρύσιον ἥλθες

ἄρμ' ὑπαξεύξασα κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγου
ώκεεψ στροῦθοι περὶ γάς μελαίνης
πύκνα δινεῦντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὡράνω, αἰτε—
ρος διὰ μέσσω.

αἴψα δ' ἔξικοντο τὸ δ', ὦ μάκιρο,
μειδιάσκοις ἀθανάτῳ προσώπῳ,
ἥρε', ὅττι δῆτε πέπονθα κῶττι
δῆτε κάλημι,

κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μακινόλᾳ θύμῳ· τίνα δῆτε Πειθώ
μακις ἄγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα, τίς σ', ὦ
Ψάπφ', ἀδικήει;

καὶ γὰρ αἱ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αἱ δὲ δώρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,
αἱ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
καίκι ἐθέλοισα.

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλεπᾶν δὲ λύσον
ἐκ μεριμνᾶς, ὃσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσοι
Θῦμοις ἴμερρει, τέλεσον· σὺ δ' αὐτὰ
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

are based passages as these — where the lines in italics are literal translations — :

For I beheld in sleep the light that is
In her high place in Paphos, heard the kiss
Of body and soul that mix with eager tears
And laughter stinging through the eyes and ears,
Saw Love, as burning flame from crown to feet,
Imperishable, upon her storied seat;
Clear eyelids lifted toward the north and south,
A mind of many colours, and a mouth
Of many tunes and kisses; and she bowed,
With all her subtle face laughing aloud,
Bowed down upon me, saying, "*Who doth thee wrong,*
Sappho?"

Yet the queen laughed from her sweet heart and said:
“Even she that flies shall follow for thy sake,
And she shall give thee gifts that would not take,
Shall kiss that would not kiss thee” (Yea, kiss me)
“When thou wouldst not” — when I would not kiss thee!

Sappho's lines:

fr. 68. Κατθάνοισα δὲ κείσεαι πότα, καύ μημεσσύνα σέθεν
ἔσσετ' οὔτε τότ' οὔτ' ὑστερον· οὐ γὰρ πεδέχεις βρόδων
τῶν ἐκ Πιερίας, ἀλλ' ἀφάνης κήν· Αἴδα δόμοις
φοιτάσεις πεδὸν ἀμαχίρων νεκύων ἐκπεποταμένα.

were dilated by Swinburne into the following passage:

"Thee too the years shall cover; thou shalt be
As the rose born of one same blood with thee,
As a song sung, as a word said, and fall
Flower-wise; and be not any more at all,
Nor any memory of thee anywhere;
For never Muse has bound above thine hair
The high Pierian flower whose graft outgrows

All summer kinship of the mortal rose
And colour of deciduous days, nor shed
Reflex and flush of heaven about thine head,
Nor reddened brows made pale by floral grief
With splendid shadow from that lordlier leaf;
Yea, thou shalt be forgotten like spilt wine."

whereas on Sappho's simple phrase:

fr. 32. Μνάσεσθαι τινά φαμι καὶ ὕστερον ἄμμεων.

was built by Swinburne the gorgeous fabric of this vision:

"But me

Men shall not see bright fire nor hear the sea,
Nor mix their hearts with music, nor behold
Cast forth of heaven, with feet of awful gold
And plumeless wings that make the bright air blind,
Lightnings, with thunder for a hound behind
Hunting through fields unfurrowed and unsown,
But in the light and laughter, in the moan
And music, and in grasp of lip and hand
And shudder of water that makes felt on land
The immeasurable tremor of all the sea.
Memories shall mix and metaphors of me."

Near the end of the poem, in the words:

"Last year, when I loved Atthis . . ."

he touches a theme, to which in later years, with matured power of expression, he recurs in *On the Cliffs*, a hyperbolical eulogy of the genius of Sappho, inlaid with translations of some fragments of her verse:

"I loved thee, hark, one tenderer note than all —
Atthis, of old time once — one low long fall,
Sighing — one long low lovely loveless call,
Dying — one pause in song so flamelike fast —
Atthis, long since in old time overpast —
One soft first pause and last." —

Yet these lines, for all their tender beauty, fall short of Sappho's words:

fr. 33. Ἡράμαν μὲν ἔγω σέθεν, Ατθι, πάλαι πόκα.

— just “one sliding sigh and whisper of sound”.

Not only has Swinburne dilated Sappho's poetry, but he has also distorted its sense. Instead of presenting Sappho's ardent but not unnatural love of Anactoria, he has debased her passion into that perverse sadism that gloats on the pain and the torture of its object — nay, would immolate the lover on the altar of its cruel lust:

“I would my love could kill thee; I am satiated
With seeing thee live, and fain would have thee dead.

I would find grievous ways to have thee slain,
Intense device, and superflux of pain;
Vex thee with amorous agonies, and shake
Life at thy lips, and leave it there to ache;
Strain out thy soul with pangs too soft to kill,
Intolerable interludes, and infinite ill;
Relapse and reluctance of the breath,
Dumb tunes and shuddering semitones of death.

Strike pang from pang as note is struck from note,
Catch the sob's middle music in thy throat,
Take thy limbs living, and new-mould with these
A lyre of many faultless agonies?”

It is this perverted passion which, to my mind, renders Swinburne's *Anactoria* in spirit as in language far inferior to Sappho's verse.

Matthew Arnold's *A modern Sappho* merely strikes the note of neglected passion but bears no resemblance to Sappho's poetry either in sentiment or in words. Still Arnold, too, was a reader of Greek fragments and reveals the influence of the lyrists in his work. But his

debt to Greek lyric poetry may be rather appreciated in the reading, than exactly defined or illustrated by line or phrase. Churton Collins says: "We may notice that it is not so much in what is formal and susceptible of exact estimation, that the influence of poetry on poetry is most real. The indebtedness of our poets to Greece, where that indebtedness is greatest, is often such as evades illustrative definition." ¹⁾.

In conclusion of this chapter a few words should be said on the imitations in English literature of Pindar's Epinician Odes. Swinburne, in the Dedicatory Epistle to the Poetical Works (1904), says: "The ode or hymn — I need remind no probable reader that the terms are synonymous in the speech of Pindar — asserts its primacy or pre-eminence over other forms of poetry in the very name which defines or proclaims it as essentially the song; as something above all less pure and absolute kinds of song by the very nature and law of its being. The Greek form, with its regular arrangement of turn, return, and aftersong, is not to be imitated because it is Greek, but to be adopted because it is best: the very best, as a rule, that could be imagined for lyrical expression of the thing conceived or lyrical aspiration towards the aim imagined. The rhythmic reason of its rigid but not arbitrary law lies simply and solely in the charm of its regular variations. This can be given in English as clearly and fully, if not so sweetly and subtly, as in Greek; and should, therefore, be expected and required in an English poem of the same nature and proportion . . . It seems strange to me, our language being what it is, that our literature should be no richer than it is in examples of the higher — or at least the more capacious and ambitious kind of

¹⁾ "Greek Influence on English Poetry" p. 71.

ode." Indeed, in English poetry, the pseudo-Pindaric and other odes are more numerous than those that strictly observe the Pindaric laws. The pseudo-Pindarics were called into being by Cowley ("Pindarique Odes") and among them we count such memorable poems as Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast* and Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, which are "wild and licentious compositions in verses of every variety of syllables and feet."¹⁾ Other variants of the Pindaric, which do not adopt the threefold structure, but still retain „an accurately corresponsive or antiphonal scheme of music" are Coleridge's *France: an Ode*, Shelley's *Ode to Liberty* and Swinburne's *Armada*. Among regular Pindarics we may mention — besides Gray's *Bard* and *Progress of Poesy* noted above — Shelley's grand *Ode on Naples*, Swinburne's *Ode on Athens* and *On the Insurrection in Candia*, and the latter poet's Choruses in *Erechtheus*, to which attention will again be drawn in the following chapter where the influence of the Greek Drama on the English poetry of the nineteenth century will be discussed.

¹⁾ Churton Collins: Op. Cit. p. 74.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREEK DRAMA. AESCHYLUS, SOPHOCLES, EURIPIDES.

The Greek drama had its origin in religious rites. From the festivals in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine, the Vintage-feasts celebrated in an Attic village sprang the drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides ¹⁾). Rustic singers, gathered round a rude altar of wood and turf, used to dance and sing to the music of the Phrygian flute, relating the adventures of the god, his wanderings over the earth, the dangers attending his triumphal progress to establish his worship in India, in Asia, in Greece. And gradually these worshippers would feign themselves to be the *satyrs*, the woodland beings who accompanied the god. Then a member of the chorus, called *ιποκριτής* or answerer, would detach himself from his companions and enact the part of Dionysus himself. Or, as his messenger, he would narrate some adventure of the god and the chorus would express in song the feelings his recital inspired. From this *dithyramb* or song to Dionysus divided between the *ιποκριτής* and the leader of the chorus, the *χορυφαῖος*, sprang plot and dialogue of the drama; out of the sympathetic comments of the general body of singers sprang the Chorus, that distinguishing feature of the Greek stage. It was Aeschylus who, by the introduction of a second actor, created out of the rude germ of a choral hymn the Attic tragedy, the supreme achievement of Greek literary art.

¹⁾ It should be noted that both tragedy and comedy sprang from the Dionysiac feasts.

The three great tragic poets in artistic sequence are Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

In Aeschylus all is in the grand style and of a severe and awe-inspiring simplicity. Majestic heroes move in stately manner across the stage and fulfil the doom appointed by supernatural powers.— Prometheus, by stealing fire from heaven, provokes the anger of the new king Zeus and, chained to a cliff in the Scythian desert, refuses amid threats and tortures to divulge the secret on which the throne of Zeus depends; at length, uttering his last defiance, he is hurled into the abyss amid hurricane and earthquake and the terrible thunder of the King of gods. — Aeschylus was a profoundly religious nature, deeply impressed by the apparent war of principles in the moral government of the world. And anxious to bring into beneficent relation humanity and the gods he strove to penetrate to a higher unity in which the seeming discord should be resolved. He found this unity in a supreme law of righteousness which is enforced by Zeus or by Necessity, the Omnipotence superior to the gods. "Thus in Aeschylus", says Jebb, "we are led up to the mysterious sources of divine and moral law. The war between the gods of heaven and hell is found to be no longer implacable, since both, constrained by Necessity and aided by her daemonic ministers, are working in the cause of Righteousness."¹⁾.

Whereas Aeschylus represents superhuman heroes in conflict with the gods, Sophocles is pre-eminently the dramatist of the human heart. He excels in delineating with subtle touches the great primary emotions of the soul. And where Aeschylus finds the higher unity of apparent discord in a divine Righteousness, Sophocles finds a solution in the analysis of

¹⁾ "Primer of Greek Literature." pp. 82, 83.

human nature itself. "The deepest instincts of human nature itself, its affections, its pity, its terror, bear witness to the unity and supremacy of an unwritten but eternal law of purity which is always identical with the true will of the gods, though not always with man's positive interpretation of that will." ¹⁾.

Euripides, the youngest of the three tragedians, stands far from Sophocles and further from Aeschylus, representing a new order of ideas and a different conception of the dramatist's art. He is altogether more modern in the atmosphere of homeliness with which he surrounds his characters; in his unrestrained pathos, which made Aristotle call him the "most tragic" of the poets; in his religious ideas, which are tinctured by pantheism and strongly influenced by the doctrines of Anaxagoras.

In later years, when the Attic drama had spent its prime, Aristotle gave his definition of tragedy and formulated the canons dramatic poetry should observe.

"Tragedy", he says, "is a representation of an action that is grave and great, complete and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear' effecting the proper purgation of these emotions." ²⁾

On the structure of the plot Aristotle remarks that a tragedy should have a δέσις or complication and a λύσις or resolution, separated by a μετάβασις or decisive turn. This μετάβασις may be simple (ἀπλῆ) and accompanied by recognition (ἐνοχγνώσις) or by recoil of the action (περιπέτεια); or it may be complex (πεπλεγμένη), as in the best kind of tragedies, and

¹⁾ Op. Cit. p. 88.

²⁾ "Poetics" VI 2.

accompanied by recognition and recoil of the action at the same time.

As regards the Unities, which have played so important a part in the later influence of the Greek drama, it is only on the Unity of Action that Aristotle insists; though the Unities of Place and Time are, with a few exceptions, also strictly observed on the ancient stage. The Unity of Action comprises unity in structure, which excludes a double plot and episodical matter, and unity of impression which implies the separation of comedy from tragedy and the maintenance of a uniform seriousness of tone. According to the law of Unity of Place the dramatic action should be confined throughout to one place; the Unity of Time, interpreted in its wider sense, limits the supposed duration of the action to twenty-four hours, whereas, in its narrower meaning, it forbids that the supposed time of the action should exceed the duration of the representation on the stage.

It is these Unities of Action, Place and Time which strongly influenced the French seventeenth century drama, and, reinterpreted by French literary critics, were adopted as canons by Dryden and the classical school.

Of the three great Attic tragedians Aeschylus was revered by Shelley, Landor, Tennyson, Swinburne; next to him Sophocles was greatly admired; but whereas Shelley read Euripides and translated his satyric drama *The Cyclops*, Landor condemned him as a moralist rather than a dramatist and disliked his plays as containing more preaching than poetry. And of Swinburne Edmund Gosse writes: "I never clearly understood the reason of Swinburne's fractious objection to Euripides which has even puzzled Dr. Verrall." We know that he was furious at the *Athenaeum*

description of *Erechtheus* as a translation of Euripides and replied: "As far as *Erechtheus* can be said to be modelled after anybody, it is modelled throughout on the earliest style of Aeschylus."

During his visits to the Baths of Lucca in 1818 Shelley read the *Persae* and *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus. "The Greek tragedians", writes Mrs. Shelley, "were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings and the sublime majesty of Aeschylus filled him with wonder and delight¹⁾." The result of his reading is apparent in *Hellas* and in the magnificent *Prometheus Unbound*. In the Preface to the former drama Shelley says: "The *Persae* of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement". From our point of view the poem is chiefly remarkable on account of its ardent enthusiasm for Hellas and the rapturous vision in the final Chorus of a great, regenerated Greece.

Far greater interest attaches for our present purpose to the splendid creation *Prometheus Unbound*. In the Preface Shelley says: "The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common

¹⁾ Note on "Prometheus Unbound" by Mrs. Shelley.

interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors . . . I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary . . . ”

Prometheus Unbound, therefore, is professedly a continuation of the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus. The latter play was only the first piece of a trilogy¹⁾ and was followed by *Prometheus Unbound*, of which a few disjointed fragments and certain details gathered from other writers have enabled scholars to reconstruct the plot. The protagonist, who at the end of the first drama had been hurled into the abyss, reappears chained to a rock in the Caucasus, where after dreadful torment he ultimately reveals the important secret, earns his

¹⁾ According to an older theory “Prometheus the Fire-Bearer” is the first piece of the Aeschylean trilogy.

pardon and his deliverance and is reconciled to Zeus.

As in all his dramas Aeschylus has vindicated the righteousness of the Supreme Being and exposed the folly and sin of running counter to his Will. For to Aeschylus Zeus was, in the words of Mr. Ernest Myers "the All-causing, All-suffering, Almighty, All-seeing, All-accomplishing Lord of Lords, Most Holy of Holies."¹⁾ "In thy hands is the balance; what can mortals accomplish without thee?" asks one Chorus; another says: "What without Zeus can befall any man?" To Zeus is referred every oracle that issues from Apollo's shrine; even Justice herself is called the child of Zeus. It is Zeus who "leads mortals to wisdom in that he ordained that to suffer is to learn." But for one remarkable passage²⁾, where the power of Zeus is represented as subject to Necessity, Zeus in Aeschylus is the Omnipotent Will.

Yet the Greek conception of the Godhead is different from the Christian and Zeus was not born the righteous Ruler of gods and men. There was a time when the new King had to fight for his position, to establish by violence his supremacy in heaven and earth. At that stage the trilogy of Prometheus begins. For in *Prometheus Vinctus* Zeus is still the young tyrant, using his power with relentless cruelty to crush the rebellious Champion of mankind. But Time brought peace and security of position and taught the Olympian King to be lenient and just. And in *Prometheus Unbound* Zeus is portrayed in a kindly mood, ready to forgive and restore to favour the former rebel against his throne. As W. L. Courtney³⁾ says: "From Zeus the young despot he turns our attention to Zeus the more mature ruler of a better organized Empire,

¹⁾ "Hellenica" 17—18.

²⁾ "Prometheus Vinctus" 527—531.

³⁾ "Mr. Hardy and Aeschylus" Fortnightly Review. 1917 I p. 478.

and transforms impatient cruelty into reasonable benevolence. The reformed Zeus can now be an object of respect and receive the worship which is his due."

Shelley either on purpose or in ignorance misinterpreted Aeschylus' design. With him Jupiter is the incarnation of tyranny, of intolerance, of oppression, responsible for all the moral and social evil against which Shelley's whole life was a passionate protest. As Vida D. Scudder observes: "Jupiter's significance is perhaps mainly political. He stands for all those institutions, civil and religious, which, once the true expression of the will of man, have become effete forms, with an innate tendency to repress progress — thus practically representing all the evil recognized by Shelley."¹⁾ Prometheus symbolizes both suffering Humanity and its Deliverer and in his passionate championship reflects Shelley himself.

In Shelley's conception reconciliation cannot be. Accordingly he makes Jupiter contract the fatal marriage which Aeschylus prevents and the issue, Demogorgon, dethrones in mystic fashion the Oppressor of mankind. Then Hercules makes his appearance in the drama solely for the purpose of unbinding Prometheus, and the great Titan is now united to Asia, who in Platonic symbolism typifies that Spirit of Love which sustains and wields the world. Thus the Spirit of Love in Man is wedded to the Spirit of Love in Nature and in the last Act, which is entirely lyrical, the redemption of Nature and Humanity is sung in a choral hymn of a renovated universe.

The task which Aeschylus as a dramatist undertook was to put into a form suitable for theatrical representation the familiar incidents of the story of Prome-

¹⁾ *Prometheus Unbound*. With Introduction by Vida D. Scudder.
pp. XXXIV—XXXV.

theus and to give to these incidents a deeper meaning by revealing in his trilogy the evolution of Zeus the despot to Zeus the righteous Father of gods and men.

Shelley's design, on the other hand, was to remodel an old Greek legend in such a way as to make it the vehicle of his revolutionary ideas, his ethical aspirations, his dreams and visions of a regenerated world. As W. M. Rossetti in his *Memoir of Shelley* says: "This is, I apprehend, what places *Prometheus* clearly, instead of disputably, at the summit of all later poetry: the fact that it embodies . . . the dominant passion of the dominant intellects of the age, and especially of one of the extremest and highest among them all, the author himself. It is the ideal poem of perpetual progression — the Atlantis of Man Emancipated." It should be observed, however, that Shelley's revolutionary ideas are abstractions made from a one-sided view of facts. For Humanity is not a chained Titan of indomitable virtue, nor is evil purely external, the tyranny of some malignant Power. Such were the speculations laid down in Godwin's *Political Justice* and it was as Godwin's disciple that Shelley conceived the deliverance of Man.

Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* differs from its Greek model not only in design and conception of the characters but also in spirit and poetical style. Instead of preserving the grand simplicity, the austere majesty of the Aeschylean drama, Shelley has produced a complex phantasmagoria, in which the Platonic mysticism is a feature no less striking than the profuseness of imagery and the redundancy of style. Once or twice, only, Shelley strikes the sublime note of his great master, as in the opening speech of the tortured Titan or in the dialogue between Ocean and Apollo at the beginning of Act III. Scene II.

Perhaps it is no wonder that Shelley's *Prometheus* should have the florid exuberance of a southern spring.

For as the poet himself truly and happily remarks: "This poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama."¹⁾

Prometheus is the prototype of all revolted and "Titanic" spirits, of all those who have to learn that

"No human counsels shall avail
To pass the bounds of that great harmony
Which Zeus ordains."

Such a character is Matthew Arnold's Empedocles, the hero of the dramatic poem *Empedocles on Etna*, which is truly Hellenic in tone and spirit and occasionally recalls the Greek *Prometheus* in details.

But far more than in *Empedocles on Etna* the influence of the Greek drama is seen in Matthew Arnold's *Merope*, which derives its chief interest from the fact that it was written in conscious imitation of Sophoclean tragedy as an attempt to transplant into English soil the supreme achievement of the Attic stage. In the admirable justificatory preface, in which Matthew Arnold complains that a too exclusive devotion to romanticism has led not only to the depreciation but to the misinterpretation of classicism, he says: "I have long had the strongest desire to attempt for my own satisfaction to come to closer quarters with the form which produces such grand effects in the hands of the Greek masters; to try to obtain, through the medium of a living language, a fuller and more intense feeling

¹⁾ Preface to "Prometheus Unbound."

of that beauty, which, even when apprehended through the medium of a dead language, so powerfully affected me....” Of the result of his endeavour Churton Collins says: “*Merope* is not only the nearest approach possible in any modern language to Sophoclean tragedy, but he has illustrated as effectively as Sophocles himself could have done had he written in English, all that can be achieved in impression by dramatic art working under the conditions imposed upon it by the Greeks.”¹⁾. Of course certain deductions should be made. Firstly it is not possible in any modern language to reproduce in exact counterpart the magic of words, the music, the peculiar cadence of the Greek. Secondly Christianity has materially altered our ethical conceptions and it is Arnold’s only concession to modern sentiment that he has refrained from portraying a heroine of the character of Electra, the protagonist of the drama to which his is the nearest approach.

Judging *Merope* by the Aristotelian canons we find the structure of the drama to be in accordance with the Greek. In the first part we are acquainted with the state of affairs in Messenia: we learn that Polyphontes, the murderer of king Cresphontes, has married Merope, the widowed queen; that in the tumult the two elder sons were slain, but Aepytus, the youngest, was concealed by his mother at the court of her father, the Arcadian king; we find Aepytus, grown to manhood, returned to Stenyclaros to avenge his father and claim the Messenian throne. Then the situation is complicated by Aepytus relating to Polyphontes the story of his own death and Arcas, a trusty servant, announcing to Merope the disappearance of the prince from the Arcadian court. The *μετάβασις* is

¹⁾ J. Churton Collins. “Matthew Arnold’s “*Merope*” and Sophocles’ “*Electra*”. p. 6.

reached when Merope, supposing Aepytus to be the murderer of her son, raises the axe to slay him in his sleep, but is prevented at the critical moment by Arcas recognizing and revealing to her the identity of the unknown guest. This *μετάβασις* — to the counterpart of which in Euripides' lost drama of *Cresphontes* Aristotle draws attention — is like the decisive turn in the best kind of Greek tragedies, for it is accompanied both by *ἀναγνώρισις* and *περιπέτεια*: recognition takes place between Merope and her son, and there is a reversal in the fortune of Cresphontes, for, after Merope's reluctant consent, the work of vengeance now proceeds apace. In the third part, the *λύσις*, the complication is resolved: Polyphontes is slain while sacrificing at the altar, which is told by a messenger after the fashion of the Attic drama and Aepytus is hailed king of the Messenian realm.

The Unities are strictly observed. There is Unity of Action, since only one train of events is evolved; Unity of Place, as the precincts of the palace at Stenyclaros are the scene of action from first to last; Unity of Time, because the supposed time of the dramatic action does not exceed the duration of the performance on the stage.

Matthew Arnold has again closely imitated his Sophoclean model by assigning great prominence to the Chorus of Messenian maidens, who by recalling the past or moralizing on the present deepen for us the meaning of what is passing on the stage. The Chorus, that essential feature of the Greek drama, held a peculiar position in the tragedies of Sophocles. We have seen that it was Aeschylus who introduced a second actor, thus creating the drama out of a choral hymn. This introduction led to the subordination of the Chorus to the dramatic action, although in his dramas it still held an important place.

In the later plays of Euripides, however, the Chorus was not merely subordinated to the action but degraded into little more than a musical interlude. It was the happy invention of Sophocles, “the most ingenious and the most felicitous conception which ever suggested itself to an artist”, to make the Chorus stand “spectator haud particeps” as the symbol of reflective and sympathetic humanity. In the preface to *Merope* Matthew Arnold says: “The Chorus was, at each stage in the action, to collect and weigh the impressions which the action would at that stage naturally make on a pious and thoughtful mind; and was at last, at the end of the tragedy, when the issue of the action appeared, to strike the final balance. If the feelings with which the actual spectator regarded the course of the tragedy could be deepened by reminding him of what was past or by indicating to him what was to come, it was the province of the “ideal spectator” so to deepen it. To combine, to harmonize, to deepen for the spectator the feelings naturally excited in him by the sight of what was passing on the stage — this is the one grand effect produced by the Chorus in Greek tragedy.”

Not only has Arnold reproduced the spirit of the Sophoclean Chorus but he has also imitated its structure in his verse. The Choruses of *Merope* consist of three parts: the strophe and antistrophe, the antithesis of thought to thought, followed by the epode, which strikes the balance of the whole.

The mention of Arnold’s structure of the Chorus leads to a general consideration of his versification and style. He made no attempt to reproduce the Greek rhythms, only “to follow rhythms which produced on [his] own feeling a similar effect to that produced on it by Greek choric poetry.” For the dramatic dialogue he employed heroic blank verse, the near counterpart

in English to the Greek metre appropriate for dramatic dialogue and soliloquy, technically known as the iambic trimeter acatalectic:

U— / U— / U— / U— / U— / U— /

If Arnold's blank verse, as Churton Collins remarks, cannot compare for rhythmic effect with the iambic trimeters of Sophocles, the fault lies not in the medium but in the artist, as is clear from a comparison with Tennyson's blank verse. Nor does Matthew Arnold equal his Greek master in the subtle charms of expression and style. "*Merope* does not recall one feature of Sophocles. Arnold makes no attempt to imitate the subtle elaboration of his master's style, his studied artificiality of expression, the pregnant suggestiveness with which by a nice discrimination in the use of words, and by delicacies of collocation he conveys so much more than he formally and definitely presents."¹⁾

A remarkable device of the Greek and especially of the Sophoclean tragedy was the use of dramatic irony. *Eipōweia* or dissimulation means in tragedy the contrast between that which seems and that which really is. Irony may be conscious or unconscious and may be revealed in action or in speech. Unconscious irony occurs in Arnold's drama where Merope, looking down on the sleeping Aepytus, dwells on the likeness of this young stranger to the image of her son as he lives in her dreams; conscious irony "where every word is pregnant with a double meaning, having one sense to the speaker and the audience who are in the speaker's confidence and another to the deluded plaything of its terrible and ghastly mockery" occurs in the final dialogue between Merope and Polyphontes,

¹⁾ J. Churton Collins. Op. cit. p. 22.

where the latter misinterprets the veiled allusions to his doom.

Lastly we come to what according to Aristotle is the end of tragic drama, the *κάθαρσις* or purification, the relieving and tempering of the passions of pity and fear. In order that this salutary moral discipline may be effected, the protagonist whose tragic fate we watch should neither be perfectly good nor yet utterly wicked, but a human being like ourselves. What involves him in ruin must not be a repulsive crime, but some frailty or a great error committed in ignorance or from a mistaken notion of right and wrong. He should moreover be a person of exalted station and possess great virtues to set off the weakness or the sin.

These conditions Arnold's hero, Polyphontes, fulfils. He is portrayed as an eminent ruler bent to pacify and promote the welfare of the state; as a stern, self-sufficient character, "of solitary thought, unshared resolve", yet kind and courteous to the woman he has deeply wronged, Merope, who testifies to

"the reverence deep,
Remorseful, tow'rd my hostile solitude,
By Polyphontes never fail'd in once
Through twenty years; his mournful anxious zeal
To efface in me the memory of his crime."

This crime, the murder of Cresphontes, the deed which ultimately results in his ruin, was not committed from ignoble motive, but as a "righteous execution" reluctantly done to save the Messenian realm. And Merope, looking down on his prostrate body, strikes the balance of his character in the words:

"I find worth in thee and badness too."

As to the intrinsic beauty of the play, apart from its success as an imitation of the Attic drama, the

critics have scarcely been lavish of their praise. Herbert Paul says: “*Merope* is far more strictly Greek than *Atalanta in Calydon*, which is not really Greek at all. But it has not the sweep, the ring, the melody, nor the sensuous beauty of that fascinating, though irregular drama. It is the form without the spirit, the body without the soul.”

Herbert Paul’s comparison leads us on to another poet, in whose works the spirit of Greek tragedy lives.

In Swinburne’s brilliant dramas *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus* the Hellenic influence, the Hellenic inspiration are patent everywhere. They appear in the sentiment and the thought which are so thoroughly Greek, that it seems, as critics have observed, as if Swinburne had learned, for the occasion at least, to think as his Greek masters, to shake off the present and live and move in the guise and fashion of ancient times. The two plays abound in Greek conceptions and ideas, expressed in a language which, though essentially romantic, invites comparison with the noblest passages of the great masters of the Attic stage.

Through the poetry of both *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus* runs, as a golden thread, a love of nature which is truly Greek, a pure, objective delight in natural phenomena, in sun, moon, stars and birds and flowers, in snow and fire, in the sea, especially in its violent moods, when the “wine-bright” waves are crested with flowery foam. Then both plays speak of a pure Hellenic joy in the bodily excellence and strength of men, in the full-grown beauty of men and women, of a keen appreciation of physical delights.

The passage in *Atalanta*, were Althaea, bemoaning the death of her brothers, says:

“For all things else and all men may renew;
Yea, son for son the gods may give and take,
But never a brother or sister any more,”

contains the same argument by which in Sophocles' drama Antigone justifies her devotion to the dead.

The lines in *Erechtheus*, where the maiden Chthonia takes leave of the Athenian elders:

recall Antigone's lament when unmarried, childless she is doomed to a stony grave.

The splendid marine picture of the battle between land and sea, contained in the fifth Chorus of *Erechtheus*, defies comparison with the spirited description of the battle of Salamis given by Aeschylus in the *Persae*; and neither Pindar, when he addresses Athens with:

fr. 76. Ὡς ταῖς λιπαρχίαις καὶ ιστέρφανοι καὶ ἀσιδίμοι,
Ἐλλάδος ἔρεισμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθῆναι, δαιμόνιον πτολίεθρον.

nor Aeschylus, when he says of the Athenians:

οὐτινος δοῦλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπηκόοι.

"Persae." 242.

nor yet Sophocles, when in *Oedipus Coloneus* he eulogizes his native city, have surpassed the rapturous praise poured by Swinburne on Athens and her people:

"Dear city of men without master or lord,
Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
Who stands in her sight and in thine, O sun,
Slaves of no man, subject to none;
A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,
A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory
That none from the pride of her head may rend,
Violet and olive leaf purple and hoary,

Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,
Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend;
A light upon earth as the sun's own flame
 A name as his name,
 Athens, a praise without end."

The philosophic principle underlying both dramas is the Greek conception of Fate or *'Ανίκητη*; and in both *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus* the dispensations of Fate are presented in cruel forms. There is an immense difference between the Necessity of Swinburne's dramas and the Omnipotence as conceived by his great master Aeschylus. For Swinburne's Fate is not a Supreme Will enforcing the law of righteousness in the universe, it is an arbitrary power indifferent to right and wrong, sometimes presented as a Supreme Jealousy, sometimes as a positive Evil, hostile to mankind and inspiring man with hatred as well as fear. Especially in *Atalanta*, in the words of Althaea and in some of the Choruses whose vehemence was repugnant to Tennyson¹⁾, Swinburne's conception of Fate²⁾ as a supreme evil is set forth:

"But the gods love not justice more than fate,
And smite the righteous and the violent mouth,
And mix with insolent blood the reverent man's
And bruise the holier as the lying lip."

"Fate, mother of desires and fears,
Bore unto men the law of tears;

.
An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
The bitter jealousy of God."

"Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us,
One saith, and hidden our eyes away from sight,

¹⁾ "Memoir" p. 416.

²⁾ It should be noted that Swinburne uses without apparent discrimination the terms "Fate", "gods" and "God."

And made us transitory and hazardous,
Light things and slight;
Therefore, because thou art strong, our father, and we
Feeble; and thou art against us
Because thou art over all who are over us;
Because thy name is life and our name death;
Because thou art cruel and men are piteous,
And our hands labour and thine hand scattereth;
All we are against thee, against thee, O God most high."

As regards structure both plays have an outward resemblance to their Greek model in the division into *stasima* and *episodes*, and in the prominence assigned to the Chorus, which is, in truth, the "ideal spectator" and voices in splendid lyrics the feelings and associations suggested by words or the course of events. But they depart from the Aristotelian canons in the structure of the plot which in neither case has a distinct δέσις and λύσις, an action rising to and falling from a decisive turning-point. Some of the technical devices of the Greek drama have been adopted: in *Atalanta in Calydon* there is skilful "stichomythia" or cut-and-thrust dialogue in alternate lines; and in *Erechtheus* the disclosure of Chthonia's doom is delayed by hint and question and euphemism, though the response is never for a moment in doubt. The scene reminds one of a passage in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, of the long-drawn dialogue between Oedipus and the herdsman, where the fatal truth is apparent to all save to the hero who defers the revelation of his birth.

In both plays, as in the Attic drama, the lyrical element is not restricted to the Choruses but extends to the more exalted parts of the episodes. We may

divide the lyrical passages into such as fall into regular stanza-form and those that are built on the ode-structure of strophe, antistrophe, epode. The former kind is usual in *Atalanta*, whereas the latter prevails in *Erechtheus*, which is thus metrically the more orthodox of the two. It was "the leaping and rolling crests of the stanzaic chants in *Atalanta*", the ringing, rhythmic music of the lines:

"When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces
The mother of months in meadows and plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain."

which suddenly lifted Swinburne into fame; but the poet himself singled out "the antiphonal lamentation for the dying Meleager" as one of the "best things" in these two plays. These antiphonies, however, are not modelled on any classical prototype. They differ from the great lyrics in *Erechtheus*, which are Pindaric Odes of the kind which Swinburne in the Dedicatory Epistle proclaims to be "something above all less pure and absolute kinds of song by the very nature and law of its being." Most splendid are the song of the mythical rape of Oreithyia, in which the sweep and terror of the north wind is felt and the description of the battle between the forces of sea and land, where the rush of chariots and "splendour of spears" is presented in a picture of raging tempest and foaming seas.

"For a fourfold host upon earth and in heaven is
arrayed for the fight,
Clouds ruining in thunder and armies encountering
as clouds in the night.
Mine ears are amazed with the terror of trumpets,
with darkness mine eyes,
At the sound of the sea's host charging that
deafens the roar of the sky's.

.

As the swing of the sea churned yellow that
 sways with the wind as it swells
Is the lift and relapse of the wave of the chargers
 that clash with their bells;
And the clang of the sharp shrill brass through
 the burst of the wave as it shocks
Rings clean as the clear wind's cry through
 the roar of the surge on the rocks:
And the heads of the steeds in their headgear
 of war, and their corsleted breasts,
Gleam broad as the brows of the billows
 that brighten the storm with their crests,
Gleam dread as their bosoms that heave to
 the ship-wrecking wind as they rise,
Filled full of the terror and thunder of water,
 that slays as it dies."

We have said that the conception underlying the two dramas was a Fate indifferent, even hostile to mankind. It was "the power in whose dark and infinite grasp Swinburne habitually saw the universe of man."¹⁾ Yet his mind did not rest there. For instead of sullen acquiescence in the dispensations of a cruel Fate, there rose in him, with the spirit of opposition, a firm belief in the greatness of man. Swinburne lived and thought in the nineteenth century, with its strong humanitarian tendencies, with its splendid achievements in science and action, its faith in the intellect and the energy of man. And his belief in the greatness — nay the god-head of Man finds expression in these lines from the hymn entitled *Hertha*:

"A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy
 spirit, and live out thy life as the light."

¹⁾ G. E. Woodberry. "Swinburne" p. 66.

Again it forms the theme of the exultant *Hymn of Man* described by the poet as "the birthsong of a spiritual renascence," which concludes with the triumphant cry:

"Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things."

The climax, finally, of Swinburne's attempt to solve the mystery of the universe is laid down in the poem entitled *The Altar of Righteousness*, where he declares the "rule of right", the law of righteousness, to be eternal, though generations of men and gods wither like forest-leaves, and points to this inborn sense of justice in man's bosom as the perpetual oracle and guide to destiny for the human race.

Both Aeschylus and Swinburne believed in a law of Righteousness as the resolving principle in the mystery of life. But whereas the ancient thinker conceived of this Righteousness as a superhuman Power, moulding the very will of the gods to its cause, Swinburne, the modern, the nineteenth century poet, brought Righteousness down from its high throne in heaven, a purely human principle, enshrined in the soul.

CHAPER VII.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY. THEOCRITUS, BION, MOSCHUS.

"O Singer of the field and fold
Theocritus! Pan's pipe was thine, —
Thine was the happier age of Gold."

AUSTIN DOBSON.

THEOCRITUS, at once the creator and the unrivalled exemplar of the Bucolic or Pastoral Idyll, was a Sicilian by birth, spent part of his life in Cos and lived for some time in Alexandria under the patronage of Ptolemy II. His early days in Sicily gave him an intimate acquaintance with the business of "the field and fold", with the joys and griefs of the shepherd's calling, with the rude and elementary poetry of the country, the folksongs of pastoral life. Then, as now, Greek herdsmen were singers and players and Theocritus found his material ready to his hand in the alternate or *amoebaean* strains which the Sicilian shepherds improvised on their festal days. "From these Theocritus drew the *motifs* that after him were used by all poets of pastoral, the conventions and commonplaces of the singing match, the refrain, the carved bowl or lamb as prizes; the lament of the shepherd crossed in love; the lover who carves the name of his mistress on a tree or sends her presents of roses, doves, apples or locks of hair; the dirge for the dead shepherd whom all nature laments; the lover to whom the defects of his mistress seem beauties; all these Theocritus made his own."¹⁾

¹⁾ Wright. "A Short History of Greek Literature" p. 428, 429.

The *ειδύλλια* or “little pictures” which Theocritus created out of the raw material of the shepherds’ strains have certain special qualities of spirit and style. They join the rusticity of Sicilian and Coan shepherds to the artistry of the Alexandrian court. For on the one hand they breathe a kindly sympathy with simple things, a genuine love of nature, a truly Greek sense of the charms of country life. “There is true feeling for the sights and sounds of country life; the whisper of rustling leaves is in his poetry, the murmur of bees over summer flowers, the plashing of fountains in cool shades, the sunny brightness of the Sicilian sea.”¹⁾ — On the other hand they reveal an exquisite technical skill, a rare sense of form and melody of words. “Rarely, if ever has such grace been imparted to hurrying, beautiful, open-vowelled words as he has succeeded in doing. Here is the Greek sense for form in its perfection, here is the Greek delicacy, Greek melody as almost nowhere else, Greek lightness of touch, Greek restraint, and withal a love of simple things, a kindly, human sympathy with lowly life, a gentle humour, which rank him above any Greek predecessor.”²⁾

While little is known with certainty concerning the life of Theocritus, the memories of his disciples and imitators Bion of Smyrna and Moschus of Syracuse are wrapped in deeper shade of uncertainty and doubt. Bion is chiefly known for his *Lament for Adonis*; the name of Moschus is inseparably connected with the ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΣ ΒΙΩΝΟΣ, of which the splendid lines about the contrast between the seasons which are renewed, the garden which fades to bloom again, and the ephemeral lot of man who, once laid in his grave, sleeps an everlasting sleep, have become the classic model

¹⁾ R. C. Jebb. “Primer of Greek Literature” p. 142.

²⁾ R. T. Kerlin. “Theocritus in English Literature” p. 8.

for later poetry, never surpassed for their pathos or melody of words.

Greek bucolic poetry — the pastoral of Theocritus, Bion and Moschus — has influenced English literature in various ways. Indirect influence may be traced through the *Georgics* of Virgil, through the Spanish pastoral of Sannazaro, through the French of Marot, which was imitated by Spenser in the *Shepheards Calender* and lastly through the German of Solomon Gessner, the Theocritean poet-painter, who by means of idylls which were called pictures and pictures that were called idylls brought Theocritus home to the fire-sides of the common people and revived an interest in pastoral poetry not only in Germany but in England also.

The direct influence of Greek pastoral poetry is manifest in different forms. We trace it first of all in such English poems as in form and structure, in sentiment and purpose resemble the Greek bucolic idyll; secondly in the wealth of verbal allusions and imitations which from the Elizabethan era onward are scattered through English poetry and prose; thirdly there is the intangible spirit, the intellectual or emotional attitude, which may stamp a poem as Theocritean, though no parallel can be adduced and the form is not that of pastoral at all. On this last indefinable, elusive influence Kerlin says: "A truth that it is well at the outset to recognize is that much of the most truly pastoral of English poetry — and especially is this true of later times — does not go under the name of pastoral at all. But it breathes country air, it is redolent of fields and pastures, orchards and garners; it "tastes of Flora and the country-green"; it smells of full-fruited summer, and of harvest-tide; it is full of natural colour, and of rural sights and sounds. The spirit of Theocritus is there, though the piping Daphnis or the complaining Corydon be wanting, and the bleat of lambs may be

heard, though no sheep-crook be mentioned. Our younger school of poets in America are writers of this kind of pastorals, and they own Theocritus as master. This sort of poetry will always be pleasing; this sort of painting will always have its vogue, its devotees.'¹⁾

Before illustrating the influence of the Greek bucolic idyll on the works of some of the great nineteenth century poets, special attention should be drawn to three English imitations of the Pastoral Elegy or Funeral Poem.

Theocritus found current among the Sicilian peasantry the pathetic story of the love and early death of Daphnis, which perhaps symbolized the quickly fading beauty of spring. In the first Idyll Thyrsis sings the sorrows and death of this victim of Aphrodite, who goes down to the stream lamented by the nymphs and by all living things of hills and woods. On this song were modelled Bion's dirge over the mystic Adonis and Moschus' lament for his brother-minstrel Bion. And this perpetual elegy has been the mould, if not the inspiration of three great threnodies in the English language: Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais* and Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*.

The invocation of Thyrsis to the Sicilian nymphs:

πᾶς ποκ' ἄρ' ἡσθ'. ἔνα Δάφνις ἐτάκετο, πᾶς ποκα Νύμφαι,

has been closely imitated by both Milton and Shelley; and the mournful sympathy of all living things of hills and woodland has been adopted by Milton when he makes

“the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes mourn”

and again by Shelley when he presents the young

1) Op. cit. p. 7.

spring as wild with grief for Adonais' early death.

The chief inspiration of the language of *Adonais* is the ΑΔΩΝΙΔΟΣ ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΣ of Bion: "I weep for Adonais — he is dead! . . . For he is gone where all things wise and fair Descend . . . He lies as if in dewy sleep he lay . . . The quick Dreams . . . mourn their lot . . . And one . . . fans him with her moonlight wings . . . One from a lucid urn of starry dew Washed his light limbs, . . . Another clipt her profuse locks, . . . Another in her wilful grief would break Her bow and winged reeds, . . . "Wake thou", cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise out of thy sleep and slake in thy heart's core, A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs" . . . Out of her secret Paradise she sped . . . Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May, Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way . . . "Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again! Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live! And in my heartless breast and burning brain That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive, With food of saddest memory kept alive . . . O gentle child, beautiful as thou art, Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?"

There also runs through the poem a string of reminiscences from Moschus: "Most Musical of mourners, weep again! . . . And others came . . . All he had loved, . . . lamented Adonais . . . Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains, And feeds her grief with his remembered lay . . . Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down Her kindling buds . . . Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale, Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain; Not so the eagle . . . Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone, But grief returns with the revolving year. The air and streams renew their joyous tones; . . . Our Adonais has drunk poison —

oh What deaf and viperous murderer could drown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?"¹⁾

The poetry of Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* recalls in certain passages the ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΣ ΒΙΩΝΟΣ of Moschus.

αἰσὶ τοι μυκλάχαι μέν, ἐπὰν κατὰ κῆπον σῖωνται,
ἵδε τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα τό τ' εὐθυλής οὐλον ἄνηθον,
ὕστερον αὖ ζώντι καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἀλλο φύοντι·
ἄμμες δὲ οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροί, οἱ σοφοὶ ἀνδρες,
ἐππότε πρᾶτχ θάνωμες, ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ
εῦδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα νήγυρετον ὑπνου.

will have suggested the elaborate passage: "Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on, Soon will the musk carnations break and swell... But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see."

And the conclusion to the *Lament for Bion* may be compared with Arnold's next two stanzas:

"But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain."

¹⁾ It may be remarked that Shelley wrote translations — both incomplete — of the *Lament for Adonis* and the *Lament for Bion*, which are printed in H. B. Forman's edition, vol. IV pp. 232 and 235.

Among the great poets of the nineteenth century Wordsworth knew Theocritus early and gives him a place in the history of the development of his mind. In the eleventh book of the *Prelude* he says:

"Child of the mountains, among shepherds reared,
Ere yet familiar with the classic page,
I learnt to dream of Sicily...
And, O Theocritus, ¹⁾ so far have some
Prevailed among the powers of heaven and earth,
By their endowments, good or great, that they
Have had, as thou reportest, miracles
Wrought for them in old time: yea, not unmoved,
When thinking on my own beloved friend,
I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
Divine Comatas, by his impious lord
Within a chest imprisoned; how they came
Laden from blooming grove or flowery field,
And fed him there, alive, month after month,
Because the goatherd, blessed man! had lips
Wet with the Muses' nectar."

As a reminiscence from Theocritus I mention these lines from *A Poet's Epitaph*:

"He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own."

which recall Id. I 7, 8:

ἄδιον ὡς ποιμὴν τὸ τεὸν μέλος ἢ το καταχὲς
τῆν' ἀπὸ τᾶς πέτρας καταλείβεται ὑψόθεν ὄδορ.

and as an echo of the famous passage from the ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΣ ΒΙΩΝΟΣ the following lines from *Afterthought (The River Duddon)*:

"While we, the brave, the mighty and the wise,
We, Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements must vanish."

¹⁾ Theocritus. Idyll VII 78. — Wordsworth's note.

Keats Henry Alford said of that he had imbibed the very spirit of the idyll-writers of Greece. Concerning his acquaintance with Theocritus Kerlin remarks: "From the intimacy which subsisted between Leigh Hunt and Keats we might naturally expect the former, with his ardent admiration of Theocritus and his understanding of the genius of Keats, to place the Idylls in the hands of the future author of *Endymion* and of the immortal odes, assured that their spell for him would be no less than that of the Homeric Epics in the translation of Chapman."¹⁾ Indeed, the influence of Theocritus or rather Keats's affinity to the Greek bucolic poet is strikingly apparent from *Endymion* and the *Odes* and did not escape the notice of Jeffrey, who in reviewing the former poem observed: "[Keats] has contrived to impart to the whole piece that true rural and poetical air which breathes only . . . in Theocritus — which is at once homely and majestic, luxurious and rude, and sets before us the genuine sights and sounds and smells of the country, with all the magic and grace of Elysium."²⁾ — The Theocritean spirit breathes through the choral Hymn to Pan and many of the choice descriptions in *Endymion*; it pervades the imagery of the beautiful *Ode to Autumn*, redolent of fallen leaves and lingering flowers and ripening fruit; it is present, in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, in the "leaf-fringed legend" of those men and maidens — of the fair youth piping beneath leaves that will not fade, of the pious folk flocking to the rustic altar with its priest and heifer "lowing at the skies", — which may well be compared with that daedal cup in the first Idyll, where within a frame of acanthus the life-like picture is drawn of a fair woman and a toiling fisher and an urchin with two foxes in a vineyard of clustering grapes.

¹⁾ Op. cit. p. 93.

²⁾ "Works" vol. 3 p. 103.

Passing by Landor, who perhaps owed to Theocritus the form of his *Hellenics*, we come to Tennyson, the most, by far the most Theocritean of English poets, who resembled his great master in the happy combination of genuine love of nature and rare artistic skill. E. C. Stedman, in the sixth chapter of *Victorian Poets*, dwells on the likeness of the Alexandrian to the Victorian age, points to the close study made by Tennyson of the Syracusan idylls and reveals the extent and nature of Tennyson's indebtedness to the Dorian father of idyllic song. Two kinds of obligation were noted by Stedman: a suggestion of "method, sentiment and purpose"; and an artistic imitation of choice passages, so that the modern is indebted to the ancient poet "for the very form and language, which render beautiful much of his most widely celebrated verse." Later studies by Mustard¹⁾ and Churton Collins²⁾ have added fresh illustrations to confirm Stedman's results.

Both Stedman and Mustard draw attention to the striking resemblance between Tennyson's *Godiva* and the celebrated thirteenth Idyll of Theocritus. In a remarkable passage of the *Memoir* Tennyson's admiration for "the little Theocritean Idyll *Hylas*" is recorded by Palgrave in the following way: "We were sitting (1857 or so) late at night in the Farringford attic-room already mentioned; and Tennyson read over to me the little Theocritean Idyll *Hylas*, eminent for beauty in a treasure-house where all are beautiful. He dwelt particularly on the tender loveliness of the lines which describe how the fair youth, carried to the depths of a fountain by the enamoured Nymphs, faintly

¹⁾ W. P. Mustard. "Classical Echoes in Tennyson" Ch. III and "Later Echoes of the Greek Bucolic Poets" in the "American Journal of Philology" Vol. XXX 3.

²⁾ Churton Collins. "Illustrations from Tennyson", *passim*.

answered the call of his companion Heracles (Id. XIII. 58—60) . . . Tennyson, if I remember rightly, ended with that involuntary half-sigh of delight which breaks forth when a sympathetic spirit closes, or turns from, some masterpiece of perfect art in words or colours. "I should be content to die", said the author of *Locksley Hall* and *Maud* and *In Memoriam*, "if I had written anything equal to this." ¹⁾ It is interesting to find that *Godiva* is in form directly modelled on this favourite poem and, curiously enough, the story proper is told in exactly the same number of lines. We may compare the prelude to *Godiva*:

"Not only we, the latest Seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well.
And loathed to see them overtaxed; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back
Godiva, wife of that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry —"

with the opening lines of Id. XIII:

Οὐχ ἀμῖν τὸν "Ερωτα μόνοις ἔτεχ", ὡς ἐδοκεῦμες,
Νικία, ἅτιν τοῦτο θεῶν ποκχ τέκνου ἔγεντο·
οὐχ ἀμῖν τὰ καλὰ πράτοις καλὰ φύνεται ἥμεν,
οἵ Θυστοὶ πελόμεσθα τὸ δ' αὔριον οὐκ ἐσφράμες·
ἀλλὰ καὶ 'Αμφιτρύωνος ὁ χαίλιεοκάρδιος ίός,
ὅς τὸν λὸν ὑπέμεινε τὸν ἄγριον, ἥρατο παιδός,
τοῦ χαρίεντος "Τλα,

It is in *Oenone*, which owes its spirit to the second Theocritean Idyll, that we meet with Tennyson's earliest adaptation of the pastoral elegiac refrain.

Oenone's words:

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die,"

¹⁾ "Memoir". pp. 836, 837.

recall the appeal of the forsaken Simaetha (Id. II):

φραζεό μεν τὸν ἔρωθ' οὔθεν ἵκετο πότυς Σελάνα.

and similar refrains in the Dirge over Daphnis (Theocr. I) and the *Epitaph of Bion* (Mosch. III).

The attitude of Oenone, who,

“leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness,”

is like the attitude of the jilted goatherd in the third Idyll:

ἀστεῦμαι ποτὶ τὰν πίτυν ὥδ' ἀποκλινθεῖς·

The picture of the lizard who “with his shadow on the stone, rests like a shadow” is a reminiscence of Id. VII. 22:

ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σκύρος ἐν χιμαρτιῶσι καθεύδει,

and the contrast of the peace of nature to the pain and tumult in Oenone’s breast recalls Simaetha’s complaint in a similar situation (Id. II 38, 39.):

ἵνιδε στυγῆ μὲν πόντος, στυγῶντι δ' ἄγιται·
ἀ δ' ἔμὰ οὐ στυγῆ στέρων ἔντοσθεν ἀνία.

The very beauty of Oenone, “loveliest . . . in the charm of married brows” is Theocritean and recalls the *σύνοφρης κόρη* of Id. VIII 72.

The Lotos-Eaters again, that curiously modern presentation of an antique theme, affords a fine illustration of that subtle culling process by which Tennyson selected choice passages from the Greek pastoral as the growth of the poem suggested them at random to his mind. In the thirteenth Idyll the Argonauts come late in the afternoon to a land of cliffs and streams, of meadows set with sedge whence they cut for their couches pointed flag-leaves and low galingale. “In the afternoon” the Lotos-Eaters “come into a land” where

"Through mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale."

The sentiment of the *Choric Song* recalls certain passages from Bion and Moschus. The lines:

"All things have rest . . .
Death is the end of life; ah why
Should all life labour be?"

are not unlike the conclusion to the seventh poem of Bion¹⁾: "O how long shall we go thus miserably toiling and moiling, and how long shall we lavish our life upon getting and making, in the consuming desire for more wealth and yet more? Is it that we all forget that we are mortal and Fate hath allotted us so brief a span? . . ."

And with the spirit of Moschus IV 4—13: "But when the deep waxes grey and loud, and the sea begins to swell and to foam and the waves run long and wild, then look I unto the shore and its trees and depart from the brine, then welcome is the land to me and pleasant the shady greenwood, where, be the wind never so high, the pine-tree sings her song. O 't is ill to be a fisher with a ship for his house and the sea for his labour and the fishes for his slippery prey. Rather is it sleep beneath the leafy plane for me, and the sound hard by of a bubbling spring such as delights and not disturbs the rustic ear." — with the spirit of these lines may be compared the sentiment of the following passages:

"Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
· · · · ·
How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
· · · · ·

¹⁾ "The Greek Bucolic Poets" with an English Translation by J. M. Edmonds. (Loeb's Classical Library).

To watch the emerald-coloured water falling
Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine?
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.”

of which the last also reveals a likeness to Theocr. V.
31—34 and VII 132—137.

The Gardener's Daughter shows a close resemblance
in outline and spirit to the *Thalysia* or the *Harvest Feast*.

The poem begins:

“This morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter;

Then follows a eulogy of the poet's friends Eustace
and Juliet and a description of the English fields in May:

“. . . . All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer
. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
. To left and right
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.”

The *Thalysia* (Theocr. VII) begins:

“Ἡς χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔγώ τε οὐκὶ Εὔκριτος εἰς τὸν “Αἰεντα
εἴρπομες οὐ πόλιος, σὺν οὐκὶ τρίτος ἄμμων ’Αμίντας.

Then follows an account of the poet's friends
Phrasidemus and Antigenes and a description of the
Coan farm in summer (Id. VII 138 ff.):

“The brown cricket chirped busily amid the shady
leafage, and the tree-frog murmured aloof in the dense
thornbrake. Lark and goldfinch sang and turtle moaned,

and about the spring the bees hummed and hovered to and fro. All nature smelt of the opulent summertime, smelt of the season of fruit.” —

πάντ’ ὥσδεν θέρεος μάλα πιονος, ὥσδε δ’ ἐπώρας.

The orchard picnic in *Audley Court* has a classical counterpart in the same feast at the Coan farm. Of the two meals the one is purely Sicilian, consisting of pears and apples and white plums, while

τετράνεας δὲ πιθῶν ἀπελύετο κρατὸς ἔλειφρ.

The English feast on “a dusky loaf” and “pasty costly-made” and

“last with these
A flask of cider from his father’s vats,
Prime, which I knew.”

Moreover, in the two songs of this idyll:

“Oh! who would fight and march and countermarch?”
and

“Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me,” we have what Stedman calls the “isometric song, composed in the metre of the whole poem”, which is a common device of Theocritus and of which Tennyson has thirteen, many of them in “riddling triplets of old time”, scattered through the *English Idyls*, *The Princess* and the *Idylls of the King*.

In *The Princess* the “laborious orient ivory” of the Prologue recalls the famous distaff of Id. XXVIII 8, “offspring of laboured ivory” — ἵλεφαντος πολυμόχθω.

The passage in Section III:

“The crane”, I said, “may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.”

may be compared with Id. IX 31, 32:

τέττιξ μεν τέττιγι φίλος, μύρμηκι δὲ μύρμαξ,
ἱρηκες δ’ ἵρηξι, ἐμὶν δ’ αἱ Μοῖσα καὶ ὄδα.

The “small sweet idyl” near the close of this poem, which is adapted and developed from the invocation of the Cyclops to Galatea, affords a splendid illustration of Tennyson’s art.

“Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold he
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spurted purple of the vats,
Or fox-like in the vine;
. Let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, *and leave*
The monstrous ledges there to slope
. but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I,
Thy shepherd, pipe, and sweet is every sound;
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.”

The poem may be compared with Theocr. XI 42—46:

ἀλλ’ ἀφίκευσθ ποθ’ ἀμέ, καὶ ἔξεις οὐδὲν ἔλασσον,
τὰν γλαυκὴν δὲ θάλασσαν ἔα ποτὶ χέρσου ὄρεχθεῖν.
ἀδίον ἐν τῷντρῳ παρ’ ἐμίν τὰν νύκτα διαζεῖς·
ἐντὶ δάφνῃ τηνεῖ, ἐντὶ φαδιναὶ κυπάρισσοι,
ἔστι μέλας κισσός, ἔστ’ ἄμπελος ἡ γλυκίκαρπος.

“Taking the framework from Theocritus”, says Churton Collins, “he wreathes round, beneath and over it such

a wealth of original ornament, that it is barely discernible, but barely discernible it supports the work. The whole passage is a marvellous illustration of Tennyson's power of catching and rendering in English the charm of the best and sweetest Greek pastoral poetry.”¹⁾.

The four last lines are a skilful imitation of the musical passage in the first Idyll (7, 8):

ἀδιν ὃ ποιμὴν τὸ τεὸν μέλος ἡ το καταχὲς
τῆν ἀπὸ τᾶς πέτρας καταλείβεται οὐόθεν ὅδωρ.

combined with the alliterative line (I 107) which mimics the murmuring of bees:

αἱ δὲ κυλὸν βομβεῦντι ποτὶ σμάνεσσι μέλισσαι.

In *Geraint and Enid* the curious comparison:

“And bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast,
And arms on which the standing muscles sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.”

may have been suggested by the description of Amycus (Theocr. XXII 46—50):

στήθεα δ' ἐσφαίρωτο πειώρια καὶ πλατὺν ωτον
σαρκὶ σιδηρεῖη σφυρήλατος οὐκ κολοσσός.
ἐν δὲ μύει στερεοῖσι βραχιοσιν ἄκρον ὑπ' ὥμου
ἐστασκεν ἡύτε πέτροι ὀλοιτροχοι, οὔστε κυλίδων
χειμάρρους ποταμὸς μεγάλης περιέξεσε δίναις.

In *Merlin and Vivien* the charm that was wrought “of woven paces and of waving hands” recalls the dancing of the Spartan maidens — ποσσὶ περιπλεκτοῖς — in Idyll XVIII.

In *Love and Duty*,

“The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good.”

¹⁾ “Illustrations of Tennyson” p. 88.

are the “beloved Hours” that brought Adonis back to Cypris (Theocr. XV 104, 105.)

βάρδισται μακάρων “Ορχι φίλαι, ἀλλὰ ποθειναι
ἔρχονται πάντεσσι βροτοῖς κιεὶ τι φορεῖσαι.

In *Maud*, lastly, the phrase “labour and the mattock-hardened hand” is a borrowing from Id. XVI 32:

ώσει τις μακέλη τε τυλωμένος ἔνδοθι χεῖρας.

The list of reflections and reminiscences has not been exhausted but enough has been said to suggest the extent of Tennyson’s obligations to the three Greek masters of idyllic song. Wherever we turn in Tennyson’s poetry, we are never long in meeting with the spirit of the Greek idyll, that spirit which is born of an exquisite susceptibility to the sights and sounds and charms of the country and a consummate skill for conveying impressions by means of felicitous phrase and suggestive music of words. “It may be said generally”, says Stedman, “that our poet imitates the Sicilians, and them alone, of all his classical models, in the persistent ease with which sound, colour, form and meaning are allied in his compositions. False notes are never struck, and no discordant hues are admitted.”¹⁾ And as Theocritus — more than any ancient poet — brings home to the reader the sunny beauty of the Grecian isles with their hills and groves and pleasant pastures, their abundance of fruit and corn, their liquid rills and fountains and deep-blue girdle of the summer sea, so Tennyson — more than any modern poet — conveys to the reader the subtle charms of fields and woodland, the varying beauty of the seasons, the homely sights and sounds of the English country-side.

¹⁾ Op. cit. Ch. VI p. 227.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY.

PLATO.

Platonism was in many respects an alien phenomenon in ancient Greece. Whereas the average Greek kept his feet firmly on the ground and lived in a world finite and actual and real, Plato scorned the earth and aspired to a spiritual heaven. Whereas the Greek view of life was determined by a peculiar directness, a tendency to dwell on the "actual and unimaginary qualities" of things, Plato was a mystic who behind the visible and temporal apprehended the eternal and unseen. Again, whereas to the Greek, man was a unity of body and soul with brilliant possibilities which might be realized even in this finite life, Plato broke up this splendid unity, created an antagonism between the life of the body and that of the soul and preached the gospel of other-worldliness, conceiving the vision of a future world.

For the purpose of the present study Plato's system of philosophy may be analyzed into the theory of Ideas, the doctrines of pre-existence and reminiscence, and the theory of Love.

The Platonic theory of Ideas supposes that there are two worlds. There is the *ορατὸς τόπος*, which is material, perceptible by the senses, visible and temporal, a world which has no real existence, but is for ever changing, decaying, perishing, to be perpetually created anew, with endless variety, never the same. And there is the *νοητὸς τόπος*, which is spiritual, perceptible only by pure intelligence, invisible and eternal, the World

which really is. This is the World of Ideas, the World of the real essences, the types, of which the phenomena of this temporal world are but the copies, faint and imperfect, dimly reflecting the splendour of those original forms.

This doctrine, in its most general aspect, is the expression of a mood, familiar to all who belong to the pensive, imaginative, idealizing type of humanity, the characteristic temper of the mystic and the poet, the mental attitude of one who in the words of J. E. Stewart "has a curious eye for the endless variety of this visible and temporal world and a fine sense of its beauties, yet is haunted by the presence of an invisible and eternal world behind, or, when the mood is most pressing, within the visible and temporal world and sustaining both it and himself — a world not perceived as external to himself, but inwardly lived by him as that with which at moments of ecstasy, or even habitually, he is become one."¹⁾ And this mental attitude which may be called personal Platonism, which is independent of a knowledge of Plato and merely the result of a natural affinity to Plato's mind, is a vital spirit in all the great poetry of the world.

According to Mr. Stewart the classic authority on this personal Platonism is Wordsworth's poem *The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind*. "The essential nature and the necessary conditions of the Platonist mood, as experienced by one who is a poet, are set forth by Wordsworth in the *Prelude* with such subtlety of analysis and completeness of circumstance . . . , that the Platonist mood revealed as a personal experience in the *Prelude* [may be made] the touchstone of the genuineness of the Platonism ostensibly present in

¹⁾ J. E. Stewart. "Platonism in English Poetry" (*English Literature and the Classics*. p. 26.)

the writings of other English poets.”¹⁾ The greater part of Wordsworth’s poems are steeped in this spirit of personal Platonism; scattered throughout his works words and phrases such as “image”, “vision”, “soul”, “the shows of sky and earth”, “the types and symbols of eternity” bear witness to a mind haunted by the presence of the eternal while rejoicing in the beauties of the transitory world.

According to Mr. Stewart the Platonism of Wordsworth is a personal experience little, if at all, influenced by tradition. In this respect he agrees with J. H. Shortouse, who — in a paper read to the Wordsworth Society in 1881 — notes a general similarity between Wordsworth’s teaching and that of Plato, but doubts if the poet was actually acquainted with Plato’s works. Still evidence has been found in Wordsworth’s poetry of an early acquaintance with Plato²⁾; and though inquiries respecting the curriculum at St. John’s College, Cambridge, have not established the fact that he read Plato there, the place itself had been of old a home of Platonic studies, whose strong traditional influence he cannot have escaped. Besides, he was intimately acquainted with Coleridge — and Coleridge was an ardent lover of Plato, of his “sunny mist”, his “luminous gloom”, a mystic himself and a Neo-Platonist, who “immersed himself in the divine imaginings of Plotinus”³⁾ in his student-days. As a more positive proof of Wordsworth’s knowledge of Plato we have the catalogue of the library of Rydal Mount⁴⁾, which contains not only a Greek lexicon, a Greek grammar and an intro-

¹⁾ Op. Cit. p. 35.

²⁾ See the Modern Language Notes. XXXIII “Wordsworth’s Knowledge of Plato” by Elliott A. White. (corrected and supplemented by Prof. Lane Cooper).

³⁾ C. H. Herford. “The Age of Wordsworth.” p. 170.

⁴⁾ Transactions of the Wordsworth Society. 195—257 (passim.)

duction to the Dialogues, but also the Dialogues themselves, both translation and original text. And though the presence of these volumes in his library is no conclusive evidence that he knew their contents, yet it may fairly be thought that Wordsworth was more or less acquainted with the writings of Plato and that he knew his philosophy as expounded in the Dialogues.

If then we may grant Wordsworth some knowledge of Plato, we proceed to inquire whether by the side of the purely personal Platonism the influence of Platonic doctrines may be traced in the poet's works.

According to Plato's theories of pre-existence and reminiscence we had communion with the World of Ideas before our souls became imprisoned in the flesh, before "in that uphill path to the highest arch of heaven" the sensual steed of the soul's chariot got the better of the spiritual one and dragged the chariot down — and back to this World our souls aspire, striving in a continual struggle between the spiritual and the sensual to regain the glory of the pre-existent life. And whenever the soul discerns the good, the beautiful, the true in the drossy copies of this earth, a vision of the Ideas of Goodness, Beauty, Truth flashes through the transparency of things and recalls the antenatal world. And in those who truly aspire these visions draw the soul ever nearer to eternal life, until at last, its wings reformed, it soars up to dwell among the gods in the heavenly regions whence it came.

Now if we turn to Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* and consider passages as these:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness

And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

and

"Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Uphold us, cherish us."

we might at first sight agree with the "sceptic" in Blackwood's Magazine (1829), who looked upon the Ode as a late expression of Plato's doctrines — an allegation which Wordsworth himself denied. Still Churton Collins¹⁾ speaks of a borrowing from Plato, whereas Stopford Brooke says that Wordsworth modified the Platonic ideas, that he "liked these ideas of pre-existence and reminiscence and made his own thought out of them."²⁾. On the other hand we have Walter Raleigh's opinion: "It was not by an acquaintance with Platonic philosophy that he arrived at his glorification of childhood, but by looking at nature and life with an open mind."³⁾.

And, indeed, the conception that "the Child is Father of the Man", that the heavenly glory which surrounds us at our birth fades slowly with advancing years, though shadowy recollections come and enable us at times to "have sight of the immortal sea" — is so intimately interwoven with Wordsworth's personal experience of life, it was moreover so common a theory in the days in which he wrote, that we need hardly go back to Platonic philosophy as the direct source and inspiration of the Ode. None the less it is quite probable that Wordsworth, when elaborating his ideas, thought of

¹⁾ Churton Collins. "Greek Influence on English Poetry." p. 120.

²⁾ Stopford Brooke. "Theology in the English Poets."

³⁾ Walter Raleigh. "Wordsworth." p. 165.

Plato's doctrines of pre-existence and reminiscence and modified them to suit his theme. But even granted that he made use of Platonic doctrine, we could scarcely speak of a borrowing from Plato, as the poetry in which the theory is clothed, the image of the clouds of glory and that of the Star that set elsewhere and rises with us at our birth is wholly unlike the poetic imagery of the *Phaedrus*. Still less accurate would it be to speak of a late expression of Plato's doctrine, since Wordsworth altered the ancient theory so materially, that he made the visions brighter, the memories of a pre-existent life more powerful in the child than in the youth and the grown man.

The doctrine of reminiscence is also illustrated in the *Evening Ode*. One of those glimpses of glory which were so frequent in early youth visits the poet again on "an evening of extraordinary splendour and beauty", and while the mountain-ridges seem a golden ladder on whose bright steps one might ascend to heaven, he feels the wings already playing at his shoulder and for a moment his soul rejoices in a second birth. Here, too, the experience is the poet's own but the image of the wings suggests the influence of the *Phaedrus*.

Confessedly due to Platonic influence is the sonnet opening with the line "I heard (alas! 't was only in a dream)", where in a note appended the poet acknowledges his debt to the *Phaedo*.

"I heard (alas! 't was only in a dream)
Strains — which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.

For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
She soared — and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow."

Here the image of the Swan is derived from *Phaedo* 84 E and 85 A and B, where Socrates compares himself to a swan, which sings most and best when about to die, the Swan, Apollo's bird, having prophetic vision and, because it has foreknowledge of the blessings in the other world, singing and rejoicing in the hour of death. And where Wordsworth speaks of "the ungenial Hollow of the dull earth" he thought of a passage in that fantastic picture of the universe drawn by Socrates near the end of the *Phaedo*, where he describes the earth as a large round ball with "many hollows of very various forms and sizes" and us, human beings, as dwelling in those hollows and by reason of our weakness unable to attain to the upper surface of the air.

Although the spirit of personal Platonism pervades Shelley's poetry, his verse, on the whole, abounds too much with personifications of the modes of human action, feeling and thought and the phenomena of external nature, to betray the influence of the Platonist mood in the same unmistakable manner as Wordsworth's poetry does. But though personal Platonism may not be conspicuous in Shelley, he certainly had for Plato a natural affinity of mind. In the Preface to the First Collected Edition (1839) Mrs. Shelley says: "His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality; and this is a taste shared by the few... few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of

abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλόν of the Socratic philosophers, with our sympathies with our kind. In this Shelley resembled Plato; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal than in the special and the tangible. This did not result from imitation; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. He then translated his *Symposium* and his *Ion*; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition than Plato's Praise of Love translated by Shelley."

What Mrs. Shelley thought typical of both Plato and Shelley, what is indeed their chief characteristic as thinkers and poets is, that to them the things of the mind are the only true realities compared to which matter is but "the dream and the shade", that the abstract and ideal world is always to them more real than the world of visible and tangible things. This mental attitude gave rise to a peculiar quality in Shelley's poetry, to that extreme "tenuity", of which critics have complained. For unlike other poets he does not illustrate mental processes by physical parallels but the reverse. Thus he says in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*: "The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind or from those external actions by which they are expressed." And in *Hellas* he describes "thought" as the one eternal and fundamental thing:

"Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity."

"Earth and ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
The sapphire floods of interstellar air

... this Whole
Of suns and worlds and men and beasts and flowers,
... Is but a vision ...
Thought is its cradle and its grave."

And again :

“Thought

Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are ...
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that is hath dominion o'er.”

This supersensuous world, which is so vividly present to Shelley is not conceived of by him as being another world, but rather as the true essence and real being of this, as the invisible and eternal behind the visible and temporal, as the divine immanent in the human and perceptible only to the pure of soul. To Shelley, no less than to Plato and Wordsworth, our life on earth is but a dream and the phenomena of this world but fleeting copies, mere types and symbols of the eternity behind :

“Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis.”

In scores of passages this conception is found :

“The painted veil which those who live call life.”
Prometheus Unbound.

“Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity.”
Adonais.

“Peace, peace, he is not dead, he doth not sleep,
He hath awakened from the dream of life —
‘T is we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife.”

Ibid.

Not only did Shelley greatly resemble Plato, but, especially in the later years of his life, he also made a close and constant study of Plato's works. So natural

affinity has combined with serious study to make Platonic philosophy a powerful influence in his life, to enrich his mind with a store of conceptions and ideas, to permeate and saturate all his poetry with Plato's thought.

How much Shelley's mind was influenced by Platonic philosophy appears from the fact that even his religious system, his conception of a Supreme Power is Greek and Platonic rather than Christian or Biblical. Perhaps he suggests himself the tendency of his thought when in the Prologue to *Hellas* he makes Christ plead for Greece "by Plato's sacred light". Indeed, the God in whom Shelley believes is a World-Spirit with many of the attributes of Plato's Supreme Power. It is the essential Unity underlying the manifold forms of creation, the One in contradistinction to the many:

"The One remains, the many change and pass."

Adonais.

It is at the same time immanent and transcendent; it is the forming and formative Spirit struggling with matter and moulding it to Its will:

"Which wields the world with never-wearied Love,
Sustains it from beneath and kindles it above."

Ibid.

or

"...the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light."

Ibid.

Then again it is the Love of Plato's *Symposium*:

". . . that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst."

Ibid.

or the Supreme Wisdom of the *Phaedrus*:

"Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
To hail thee, and the elements they chain
And their own will to swell the glory of thy train.
O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being."

The Revolt of Islam.

Not only in religion generally but also in special theories and doctrines there is a close resemblance between the modern poet and the great thinker of ancient Greece.

Plato not only believes in a dual world but also in a dual self in every man. To him the body is a prison and the life of the body a mere darkness compared with the life of the soul; and in the *Republic* he depicts the human race as beings imprisoned in a cave, bound in chains, and looking out on a high wall on which the shadows and nothing but the shadows of the true realities are vaguely thrown. To this allegory Shelley alludes when he says:

"Figures ever new
Rise on the bubble, point them as you may;
We have but thrown as those before us threw
Our shadow on it as it passed away."

The Triumph of Life.

In *Hellas* a joy "burst, like morning on dream . . . through the walls of our prison"; and himself he calls a sprite

"Imprisoned for no fault of his
In a body like a grave."

With a Guitar.

And again in *Prince Athanase*:

"Memories of an antenatal life
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell."

In these lines there is also an allusion to Plato's theory of reminiscence and, indeed, the Platonic doctrines of pre-existence and reminiscence are fairly often referred to in Shelley's works. Sometimes he seems to have believed in a pre-existence in a heaven-world, as when he addresses Emilia Viviani thus:

"O too late
Beloved! O too soon adored by me!
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine."

Epipsychidion.

then again in a re-incarnation, a succession of births and deaths:

"They are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal,
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go."

Hellas.

And in this heaven-world, to which the soul ultimately returns, both Plato and Shelley admit as one of its chief delights intercourse with the great dead. In the *Apology* Socrates asks "Or again, what would not any of you give to meet with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer?"; and so in *Adonais* the dead poet is represented as meeting the souls of great men who were also gifted and died young:

"Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved

Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot
Arose; and Lucan by his death approved."

Lastly — for we cannot dwell on minor points, on similar political ideas and cosmic speculations adopted and blended with modern astronomy¹⁾ — we turn to Plato's influence on Shelley in what is known as the theory of Love.

In the *Phaedrus* we learn that, since sight is the keenest of our senses, it is the seeing, the contemplation of a beautiful object — a man or a woman — which most vividly recalls to the trammelled soul the brilliant visions of the Ideal World; that, on beholding them, the soul is greatly disturbed and agitated and all the symptoms of falling in love come on. Then love is born and soul communes with soul. And in the *Symposium* Diotima says, that starting from the love of beautiful objects we should advance in graduated ascent from the more to the less material finally to reach the supreme vision of Ideal Beauty, which is at the same time the vision of Ideal Goodness and Ideal Truth. For to the Greek these three were one.

Of Shelley Prof. Dowden says that "no other poet has pursued with such breathless speed on such aerial heights the spirit of ideal beauty". It is the Intellectual Beauty of his early Hymn:

"Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form.

Thy light alone — like mist o'er mountain driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

1). See also "Platonism in Shelley" by L. Winstanley in "Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association". Vol. IV.

Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart."

It is the Beauty

"Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world."
Epipsychidion.

or again, as in *Adonais*,

"That Beauty in which all things work and move."

To this Spirit of Beauty he vowed allegiance in his youth:

"Sudden thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked and clasped my hands in ecstasy!
I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine —"

and all through his short life he kept the vow by clothing Love and Beauty with a glory and a fervour such as no other poet has invested them with.

Three poems are conspicuous in illustrating the Platonic theory of Love: *Alastor*, *Prince Athanase* and *Epipsychidion*.

The hero of *Alastor* in his sleep receives the revelation of an ideal beauty and wandering on by sea and land in eager pursuit of the fleeting vision he perishes at last in the fruitless quest.

In *Prince Athanase* there is a direct allusion to the *Symposium*:

"Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east,
For we had just then read — thy memory

Is faithful now — the story of the feast;
And Agathon and Diotima seemed
From death and dark forgetfulness released . . ."

and of the design of this noble fragment Prof. Dowden says: "For there are two goddesses Aphrodite, as Pausa-

nias maintained in Plato's *Banquet*, and two Loves, a heavenly and an earthly; and that a seeker for the highest love should err or be deceived and fix his affections on the lower — this is the most piteous of all failures in life. Such a tragedy of the individual soul Shelley designed to exhibit in his poem of *Prince Athanase*".

Shelley's *Epipsychedion*, lastly, abounds with allusions to the Platonic theory of ἐρωτική, as perhaps we might expect in lines addressed to a lady, who herself had written on "Il Vero Amore" or Platonic love. Emilia is a winged spirit beating with vain endeavour against the bars of her prison-house, she is an incarnation of Beauty

"Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light and love and immortality!
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!"

Again she is — the very Platonic Idea —

"An image of some bright Eternity,
A shadow of some golden dream."

She and the poet are as notes of music, formed for each other, though dissimilar — an image which recalls a passage in Eryximachus' discourse in the *Symposium*.

And in glowing verse Shelley anticipates the passionate union of their souls:

"Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
Burning, yet ever inconsumable."

a union so absolute that it becomes identity:

"One hope within two wills, one will beneath
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality
And one annihilation."

For an illustration of Diotima's ascending scale of love, however, we must turn away from Shelley's poetry and carefully consider *In Memoriam* by Tennyson.

There is at first the simple love of the poet for his dead friend, of the individual for the individual:

"My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own."

Then the personality of his friend widens and the poet apprehends his kindred with all that is universally good and great:

"I see thee what thou art and know
Thy likeness to the wise below.
Thy kindred with the great of old!"

Then all that pertains to the personality drops away; the individual is mixed with and merges in the universal:

"Strange friend, past, present and to be;

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

My love involves the love before:
My love is vaster passion now;
Though mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more."

And at last, through love of the individual, the poet rises to the vision of

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element."

Yet it would be wrong to assume that in all this we have pure Platonism, for the mystic strain in *In Memoriam* is Christian rather than Platonic; nor need we of course suppose that this idea of individual love

merging in the universal was consciously suggested to the poet by Plato. Still Tennyson was a Platonist and in his poetry may be traced not only reminiscences of Platonic philosophy but also direct references to Plato and lines and phrases recalling passages from Plato's works.

There are distinct allusions to the doctrine of *ἀνάμνησις* in *In Memoriam* XLIV, where the poet speaks of "a little flash, a mystic hint" of forgotten days, which may come we know not whence; in *Early Sonnets* I, where he describes an experience most of us have sometimes had, that a strange face seems familiar, the stranger's thoughts to answer to our own, as though we had often been together, we know not in what place or time; and again in the following lines taken from *Two Voices*:

"Moreover something is or seems
That touches me with mystic gleams
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams,"

The passage in *De Profundis*:

"... who wailest being born
And banished into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world," etc.

alludes to the Platonic notion that the soul wanders in painful exile in this world and at the same time recalls the account of the creation in the *Timaeus* 35 A: "God took of the same and the other, of the divisible and the indivisible, of the finite and the infinite and made a third and intermediate kind of essence, and out of the three combined created the soul of the world".

And in the lines which follow:

"... our mortal veil
And shattered phantom of that infinite One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thyselv
Out of His whole World-self and all in all,"

may be traced Plato's conception of the World-Spirit as the One in contradistinction to the many and further a reference to the statement in the *Timaeus* 41 D that the human soul is made of the same elements as the soul of the universe.

Direct references to Plato are made in *The Princess*, II, where he is ranked with Homer and Verulam as one of the noblest types of man; and again in *The Palace of Art*, 162, where "the two godlike faces" are "Plato the wise and large-browed Verulam."

In *The Princess* we find allusions to the *Symposium*: the Uranian Venus of I 239 is Plato's Aphrodite Urania; in III 284 Diotima of Mantinea is reported as instructing Socrates in the art of love.

The passage in the later poem entitled *The Sisters*:

"... a man's ideal

Is high in Heaven, and lodged with Plato's God,
Not findable here,"

may be compared with the statements of the *Republic* 509 D, that the Idea of the Good rules in the heavenly regions, and 472, 473, that the ideal can never be perfectly realized.

The motto of *The Dawn*: "You are but children." recalls the remark of the Egyptian priest to Solon as recorded in the *Timaeus* 22 B:

"Ω Σόλων, Σόλων, "Ελληνες ἀεὶ παῖδες ἔστε, γέρων δὲ "Ελληνούκις ἔστιν.

The passage in *Lucretius* 146:

"Whether I mean this day to end myself,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit the post
Allotted by the Gods,"

alludes to Socrates' words in the *Phaedo* 62 B: ὡς ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ ἐσμὲν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ οὐ δεῖ δὴ ἐκυρών ἐκ τούτων λύειν οὐδ' ἀποδιδράσκειν.

And in *Gareth and Lynette* we have the famous description of the hero and two friends trudging across the plain and seeing in the distance the spires and towers of Camelot, faintly visible one moment and the next disappearing in the “silver-misty morn”, an allegory of the flesh-clogged soul seeing dimly, intermittently the vision of Ideal Truth, which may have been suggested by a well-known passage in the *Phaedrus*:
ἢ δὲ τοτὲ μὴν ἡρε, τοτὲ δὲ ἔδυ, Βιαζομένων δὲ τῶν ἵππων τὰ μὲν εἰδεῖν, τὰ δὲ οὐ:

“At times the summit of the high city flashed:
At times the spires and turrets halfway down
Pricked through the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that opened on the field below;
Anon the whole fair city had disappeared.”

When finally we compare the three Platonist poets of the nineteenth century we find, that Wordsworth was the poet of personal Platonism, but that the Platonist mood, that “amplitude of mind” which enabled him to “see into the life of things”, was not strongly influenced by Platonic tradition; that in Shelley natural affinity combined with serious study to steep all his poetry in the light of Platonic thought; that Tennyson scattered through his poetry random allusions to Plato’s doctrines out of a mind richly stored with all the great thoughts and sayings of the poets and thinkers of ancient Greece.

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ERRATA.

Gelieve op pag. 45, 17^e regel van boven, *in plaats van*
The Princess, III, *te lezen* The Princess, II;
op pag. 90, 10^e regel van onder, *in plaats van*
antestrophe *te lezen* antistrophe.

STELLINGEN

I.

The so-called Norman genitive is not of French origin.

II.

In Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* I. iii. 21, the First Folio reading *glaz'd* has been wrongly altered in the Globe Edition into *glared*.

III

The arguments by means of which Abel Lefranc tries to prove the three propositions laid down in *Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare"* William Stanley VI^e Comte de Derby are inconclusive.

IV.

Goethe's interpretation of Hamlet's character (*Wilhelm Meister* Bk. IV. Ch. 13) is not entirely just.

V.

Churton Collins is wrong where he says that Wordsworth adopted from Plato the doctrine of *ἀνάμνησις*. (*Greek Influence on English Poetry*. p. 120).

VI.

Bij het onderwijs in de moderne talen is de streng doorgevoerde directe methode niet aan te bevelen.

VII.

Het nieuwe wetsontwerp op het Middelbaar Onderwijs is niet in het belang van de studie der moderne talen.

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